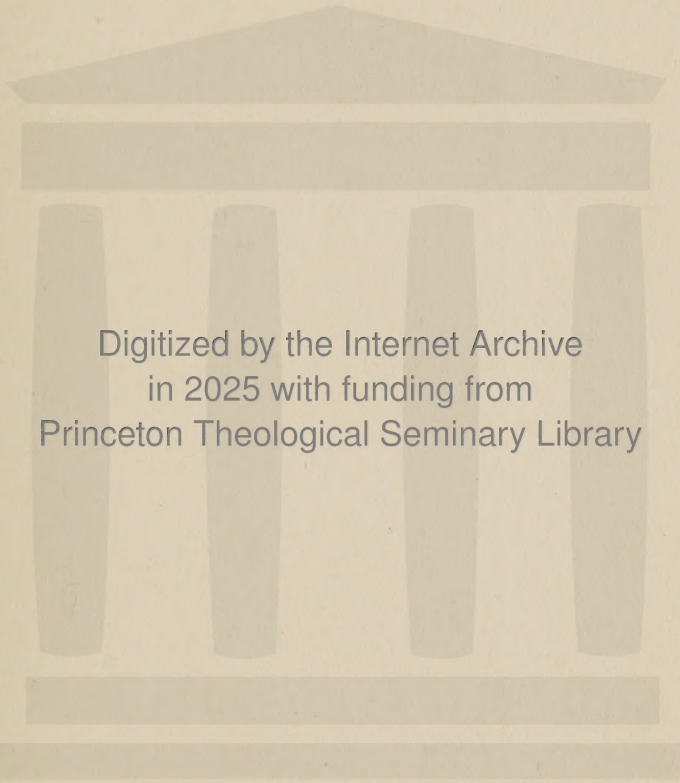


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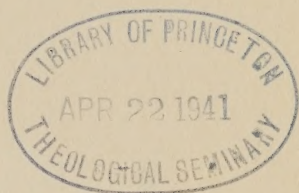


THE EMPEROR K'ANG HSI IN OLD AGE
From a portrait formerly in the Imperial Palace

JESUIT ADVENTURE IN CHINA:

DURING THE REIGN OF K'ANG HSI

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BY
ELOISE TALCOTT HIBBERT

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“The Superior Man with Benevolence
stores his Mind.”

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Dedicated to
DORIS AND JOAN NEWSON

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INTRODUCTION

The central figure in this book is that of a ruler of the Chinese Empire who, upon his accession to the throne, was given the "reign title" of K'ang Hsi, meaning "Unalterable Peace". He was the second emperor of the Ch'ing or Manchu dynasty and his reign lasted from A.D. 1662 to 1722. During that period he governed his vast empire with wisdom and foresight, he expanded its borders and brought a measure of prosperity to the Chinese people.

Although the descendant of warriors and conquerors, K'ang Hsi was himself pre-eminently a man of peace. Scholar, statesman, and soldier, he is principally remembered by posterity as a patron of the arts and of learning. Magnificent porcelain vases bearing his name which are to be found in all the museums of the world to-day, remain as a permanent memorial to his patronage of the arts and crafts of his country.

From an historical point of view the significance of this emperor lies in the fact that he was the first of the rulers of China to be in constant communication with European countries. Louis XIV of France and Peter the Great of Russia both sent representatives to his court. The Dutch and the Portuguese also played a part in the affairs of the Far East during his reign, and K'ang Hsi was sufficiently enlightened to realize with some apprehension that the day would come when the powers of the Occident would attempt to encroach upon the territory which he desired to leave intact to his descendants.

It is chiefly owing to the foreigners who visited his court that we have abundant material upon which to base a study of his life and times. Diaries and letters, written by Europeans who knew him personally, are unanimous in their praise of him as a man and a ruler. If Chinese sources sometimes disagree, it must not be forgotten that K'ang Hsi was a Manchu and a foreigner, a conqueror from beyond the Great Wall, with the power of life and death over a subject people.

There have only been short sketches of his life written in European languages during the past 200 years. Father Bouvet, a missionary of the Society of Jesus, who wrote

a biography of K'ang Hsi in French, died at the beginning of the eighteenth century. His book only covers the first part of the life of the emperor.

In this book, *K'ang Hsi, Emperor of China*, an attempt has been made for the first time to gather together the facts of the life and reign of sixty years of K'ang Hsi, with especial emphasis on his contacts with Europe and on the position of importance he occupied in relation to the world beyond the borders of his empire.

It is interesting to remember, in the light of present events, that the last great invasion of China before the present century was that of the Manchus. How they came and how they conquered is told in the first few chapters of this book, because no story of the life of K'ang Hsi is complete without a knowledge of his illustrious forefathers.

As the Chinese proverb says : " He who wishes to know the future must first make himself familiar with the past."

K'ANG HSI

PART I

HERITAGE

I

THE RETURN OF THE IMPERIAL JADE SEAL

FOR more than two thousand years before the fall of the Manchus at the beginning of the twentieth century, the Imperial Jade Seal of the Chinese emperors was the most valued of all the treasures belonging to the throne. This was because the Seal was a symbol of kingship, as necessary to a ruler of the Middle Kingdom as are the crown and sceptre to a monarch of the West. Only documents stamped with its mark were considered to be genuine and worthy to be treated with the respect due to all proclamations issued by a Son of Heaven. Other papers, although proceeding from the palace, were always subjected to the closest scrutiny and were often in danger of being considered forgeries.

Since the third century before Christ, the Imperial Jade Seal had had an eventful history. At that time, when the emperor Shih Huang Ti of the Ch'in dynasty conquered China, he ordered characters engraved upon a rare and beautiful piece of jade which read : "By command of Heaven to reign for ever." The emperor died, but the Seal, inherited by other emperors of succeeding dynasties, eventually assumed an almost divine significance so that ultimately its ownership became an essential proof of the lawful title to the throne. Time after time, when the succession to the throne was in dispute, or when a usurper had taken the place of the rightful heir, the possession of the Imperial Jade Seal determined the legitimacy of the claim of a ruler.

It was in keeping with tradition that the Imperial Seal should have been made of jade, for not only was jade believed by the Chinese to be of greater value than gold or precious stones, but in addition it possessed a symbolic significance. The stone itself was associated with the Chinese conception of a virtuous and just man. The great sage Confucius said :

"It is not because jade is rare that it is so highly valued. It is because ever since the olden days, wise men have seen in jade all the different virtues. It is soft, smooth, and shining like kindness : it is hard, fine, and strong like intelligence : its edges

seem sharp but do not cut, like justice ; it hangs down to the ground like humility ; when struck it gives a clear, ringing sound, like music : the stains in it, which are not hidden and which add to its beauty are like truthfulness : its brightness is like Heaven, while its firm substance, born of the mountains and the waters, is like the Earth. The Book of Poetry says: ' When I think of a wise man, he seems like jade.' That is why wise men love jade."

The words of Confucius had lost none of their power two thousand years after his death, nor had the Imperial Jade Seal lost any of its original significance. When it was spirited away from China by a defeated Mongol emperor in the year 1368, and hidden by him and his descendants in a nomad's tent for three hundred years, its loss was a continual challenge to the Mings who succeeded the Mongols on the Dragon throne. If, as they claimed, they ruled by divine consent, where then was their symbol of kingship, the Imperial Jade Seal ? In the eyes of many of the Chinese people, peasants as well as princes, it was as if the Ming dynasty had seized the power without the necessary mandate from heaven. Since the emperor was worshipped as the sun and moon by his subjects, it was only natural that they should wonder if the spirits were displeased with the new rulers who had failed to secure the indispensable symbol of authority.

Because of their possession of the Imperial Jade Seal it was many years before the descendants of the fallen Mongol emperor ceased to think of themselves as the rightful heirs to the throne of China. Had they been strong men like their ancestors they would have disputed the possession of the throne with the Mings. But their day was over and their fortunes had declined. For a while they attempted to retain some of the outward signs of imperial splendour in their desert home, but as the years passed and the hopes of a restoration of their dynasty receded, their importance diminished even in the eyes of the scattered tribes of their own race. So much so that in the fifteenth century the head of the family found himself obliged to adopt the simple title of *khan*. He drifted eastward with his tents and herds until he reached the border between the lands of the Mongols and the province of Liao-tung, the home of the Manchus. The only distinction left to him was his possession of the

Imperial Jade Seal. Thus had the descendants of the Mongol conquerors fallen from the high position which their ancestors had fought to obtain, until their lives were merged with those of the nomads amongst whom they lived.

Although the fortunes of the Mongols had suffered an eclipse, the era of the Imperial Jade Seal was not over. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, after three hundred years of tranquillity, it was destined to return to the centre of world events, although not in the hands of the defeated Mongols. The birth of a new power was necessary before the Imperial Jade Seal could come into its own once more. But at this time a new power was rising in the north. Inhabiting the province of Liao-tung were the Manchus, a people who were rapidly becoming a force to be reckoned with by both Chinese and Mongols alike. Once in the hands of the Manchus, the Imperial Jade Seal leapt from the obscurity of a nomad's tent into the bright light which shines upon a political arena. The Manchus conquered China not only because of their fine soldiers and superior discipline, but also because circumstances conspired to aid them. The first milestone on their triumphant march towards Peking was the unpremeditated, unforeseen conquest of the Imperial Jade Seal.

The Manchus were originally scattered groups of nomads who made their home in the rugged mountains north of Korea. Hunters and trappers, they made no pretence of cultivating the soil. They were a Tungusic people, a branch of the Nu-chens who had fought against the Sung emperors in the twelfth century. In the course of time, they migrated southward to the province of Liao-tung, but they remained a primitive and nomadic people as late as 1599, when the tribes were united for the first time under one leader. Only then did they acquire a written language of their own. It was based on the Mongol form of writing, which had been invented in 1269 by a Tibetan lama acting under the orders of Kublai Khan.

By the cultivated but insular Chinese the Manchus and the Mongols, although the latter had previously ruled over China for a hundred years and called themselves the emperors of the Yuan dynasty, were roughly grouped together under the elastic title of barbarians. Barbarians, whether they were called Mongols, Huns, Turks, or Tartars,

were all the people who lived beyond the Great Wall. Those living to the north and west of the empire were the hereditary enemies of the Chinese and had constituted a problem which had made and unmade emperors. Border warfare had ever been a persistent accompaniment of changing Chinese dynasties, while tribute, consisting of silks, wine, tea, jade, and luxuries of all sorts, with even an occasional imperial princess as a wife for a troublesome khan, was paid yearly as the price of intermittent, precarious peace.

As long as the Manchus were content to remain scattered groups of hunters they were not thought to be a source of danger to the government at Peking. It was when Nurhachu, an able Manchu chieftain, succeeded in uniting his people and formed four great banner corps of his men that the Chinese became alarmed. Nurhachu drilled his troops and organized a strong army capable not only of self-defence but of sudden and vigorous attack. At the same time he strengthened his position by building walled cities and teaching his people the rudiments of agriculture. When the Chinese became aware of this new and unwelcome activity on the part of their northern neighbour they sent an army against him. Nurhachu was a great general. He retaliated by defeating some 200,000 of the best Chinese troops, to the consternation of his opponents who had believed themselves invincible.

The strength of the Manchus lay in Nurhachu, of whom it was said :

“ He was easy with his subordinates, with whom he was always ready to consort on terms of equality, his life was spent on horseback and his plans were matured in the saddle. All business was attended to at once ; there were no arrears, no useless forms, no delays. He was prompt in rewarding, relentless in punishing, and never gave an order on the execution of which he did not insist.”(1)

On the other hand, among the Chinese generals who fought against him, there were none who could inspire their soldiers with confidence. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Ming dynasty on the throne of China was nearing the end of its cycle of power. Founded by a strong man who had the confidence of the people, the character of each succeeding emperor had deteriorated until the weak

had taken the place of the strong. At the time of the rise to power of the Manchus, luxury loving, indolent Ming rulers no longer bothered to lead their armies in person, neither did they adequately support their officers fighting in the field. Owing to the intrigues of eunuchs, the confidence of the emperor in the ability and integrity of his best generals was deliberately undermined and orders detrimental to their authority were often issued from Peking. It was no part of the plan of the eunuchs to allow any general to become so powerful or to be so successful that he was in a position to threaten their own standing at court.

When the able Manchu leader Nurhachu died in the year 1626 he was succeeded by his son, known to history as T'ai Tsung, or the Illustrious Ancestor, a man who, like his father, was a great soldier. The idea of the conquest of China was born in the brain of T'ai Tsung. His troops were few but his ambitions were great. Had it not been for his good fortune in securing the possession of the Imperial Jade Seal, the Manchu dream of conquest might have suffered the fate of other dreams. As it was T'ai Tsung lived to see his dream materialize. It was his acquisition of the Imperial Jade Seal which changed his status overnight from that of an unimportant leader of scattered tribes to that of an emperor. Once the Seal was in their hands, the Manchus were able to alter the map of the Asiatic world.

The event which led up to the capture of the famous Seal was in itself a minor one. The Mongols and Manchus were neighbours and there had been some dispute over the question of territory. All could have been settled amicably had not the Mongol khan, who had inherited the Imperial Jade Seal, sent an insulting letter to the Manchu chieftain, addressing him as "Lord of 30,000 umbrellas" while he referred to himself as "Lord of 40,000".

T'ai Tsung was in no frame of mind to accept such an indignity. He had recently received too many provocative communications from the Chinese court, and even though these had been written in flowery language according to the best traditions of the Celestial Empire, no verbal or written flow of eloquence could hide the contempt which the Son of Heaven felt for the upstart barbarian chieftain, who had had the effrontery to defeat his army. With the Mongols, however, there was no necessity for T'ai Tsung to

swallow his wrath and reply with courteous phrases. He knew, and they knew, that he was stronger than they—and besides he was willing to fight for the possession of the Imperial Jade Seal.

Supported by his powerful banner corps, T'ai Tsung made a sudden raid across the Liao River and administered a crushing defeat upon the presumptuous Mongol khan. The khan fled for his life, but his son made peace with the conquerors and surrendered to them the Imperial Jade Seal as part of the spoils of war.

Now that he had gained his objective, T'ai Tsung could afford to be generous. Moreover, as he needed the Mongols as allies, he had no wish to be unduly harsh. In order to pacify them he returned to his former enemy all the plunder he had taken away, with the exception of the Imperial Jade Seal, which he kept for himself. The son of the defeated khan was given the title of Prince of the Blood and his lands were restored to him on condition that he and his people became loyal and devoted followers of the Manchu chieftain.

Such an unexpected gesture of friendship made a deep impression on all the other Mongol tribes, and now that T'ai Tsung was in possession of the Imperial Jade Seal they were quite willing to recognize him as their leader and as the successor to the illustrious men of their own race who had once conquered the greater part of Asia and had caused Europe to tremble at the sound of their horses' hoofs. Many of the Mongol princes hastened to render him their allegiance and by doing so they increased his forces to double their former number. The holder of the Imperial Jade Seal had become a symbol to them; a symbol of renewed life and fresh hope for the abandoned ideal of conquest. Thus it was that the Ta Ch'ing or Great Pure Dynasty came into being in the year 1636, when T'ai Tsung, the Manchu chieftain, was proclaimed emperor of all the Manchus and many of the Mongol tribes.

Although the assistance of the Mongols would be of inestimable advantage to him in his projected conquest of China, T'ai Tsung was too great a soldier not to realize the difficulty of the task before him. What if his bannermen had defeated a powerful Chinese army? The country he planned to invade numbered its inhabitants by the hundreds of millions. Army after army could be annihilated and

there would always be millions to take their places. He felt that his own men must have a new kind of discipline to make them invulnerable against mass attack.

The original banner corps instituted by Nurhachu, the father of T'ai Tsung, had been distinguished from each other by different colours : yellow, red, blue, and white. T'ai Tsung doubled their number so that every able-bodied man could be enrolled in one corps or another. Each banner corps consisted of 7,500 men and was preceded by spearmen and followed by bowmen. Companies of 300 men divided the banner corps, each company having its own scaling ladders and siege catapults so that it could function as an independent unit and advance or retreat as one man. Individual bravery was never encouraged by the soldier-emperor of the Manchus ; it was the company or the banner corps that received promotions and rewards.

" Their plan of fighting was to advance in a body on the plains and in ' goose file ' through the mountains ; with their spears and shields they formed an impassable wall ; throwing forward their light cavalry they came with irresistible force upon the more exposed flanks of the enemy." (2)

Even in prosperous times the Manchus had never more than 130,000 fighting men with which to oppose the Chinese. It was not numbers that gained them their objective, but rather co-operation between T'ai Tsung and his people. His word was law and all men believed in his wisdom and foresight. After the conquest of China the size of each banner corp was increased and many Chinese who had become loyal supporters of the new dynasty were included under certain colours.

The feud between the Chinese and the Manchus had begun when the father and grandfather of Nurhachu had both been murdered by Chinese soldiers. As no satisfactory atonement had ever been made, Manchu tribesmen raided the border in revenge. These raids increased in size and daring as time went on until more than once the Manchus and their Mongol allies appeared at the gates of Peking. Each time they returned to their northern home laden with treasure, but without having gained a decisive victory. Their numbers were sufficient for a rapid advance but they had no troops at their disposal to garrison the country through which they had passed. They came not only to be

revenged but to loot, as the Manchu emperor wasted no money on the support of his soldiers. Every fighting man under his standard was obliged to find his own equipment and supplies, so that living at the expense of the enemy was part of the plan of campaign.

Once, when his troops surrounded Peking and the Ming emperor huddled in terror within the walls of his palace, the brother and eldest son of T'ai Tsung both urged him to take the city. The Manchu emperor refused saying :—

“To take the city would be easy, but the time is not yet. We have established no terror in the heart of China proper. No ; let us return to our own place and prepare for the hour of destiny, when God will deliver the whole empire into our hands.” (3)

T'ai Tsung then retreated with his army to Mukden, the capital of the Manchus in the province of Liao-tung. He was content to wait a little longer as he had seen the foreign artillery used in battle by the Chinese troops. With the help of Chinese prisoners he prepared to manufacture some “red barbarian guns” in the style of the Dutch cannon. The Manchus, like the Mongols before them, took many artisans captive during their campaigns, because skilled workmen were of inestimable value for developing a new and only partially civilized state. Unlike the Mongols, they did not kill their other prisoners of war, but instead reduced them to the rank of slaves and forced them to work in their households and fields.

Being in possession of the Imperial Jade Seal gave the Manchu emperor no little satisfaction. His troops had penetrated as far as Peking and his strength was growing daily while that of his enemy was visibly weakening. He could think of no reason why he should not remind the unhappy Ming ruler that the Imperial Jade Seal was in his own capable hands. In reply to a communication from the court at Peking, he wrote :—

“The letter brought me by your envoys is not satisfactory in form. Why is the shape of the seal oblong and not, as custom requires, square? In a matter of this kind it is impossible to sanction any deviation from usage.” (4)

A few years before T'ai Tsung would not have dared to address the Ming emperor in such a manner. That he did

so now was a clear indication that he believed his days of waiting were over.

But although T'ai Tsung was carefully preparing for the hour when he would ascend the Dragon throne and rule over the Chinese people, his plans came to nothing for he died suddenly in the year 1643, while yet a comparatively young man. He left a son of mature age who, however, did not succeed him, because Dorgun or Prince Jui as he was called, the late emperor's brother, seized the regency for himself and placed Shun-chih, a younger son of T'ai Tsung, on the throne. Prince Jui was undoubtedly the most important man in the state, now that the emperor, his brother, was dead. He had won many victories for Manchu arms and the bannermen knew him for a brave and capable leader. There appears to have been no opposition to his placing a child of five years of age upon the vacant throne and appointing himself as regent.

In this way it came about that in the following year it was Prince Jui, the regent, who led his armies to the conquest of China and the occupation of Peking. A year later the regent sent back to Mukden for his nephew Shun-chih, the boy whose destiny it was to sit upon the Dragon throne as the first emperor of the Ch'ing or Manchu dynasty. The boy was a foreigner, a barbarian in the eyes of the scholarly Chinese mandarins who were called upon to serve his House, but he carried with him on his journey south the Imperial Jade Seal, the recognized mandate from heaven and the symbol of kingship of the Chinese people. His possession of the Imperial Jade Seal was, in the eyes of many of his new subjects, the confirmation of his right to rule.

II

HOW THE ROUND-FACED BEAUTY CAME TO THE AID OF THE MANCHUS

Many years before the Manchu conquest of China and the return of the Imperial Jade Seal from the obscurity of a Mongol tent to the emperor's palace at Peking, the vast territory inhabited by the Chinese people and known to them as "All between the Four Seas" was passing through a period of upheaval and acute distress. The Ming dynasty fell, like many former dynasties, not because it was conquered from without but because it had disintegrated from within. A succession of weak emperors had lowered the prestige of the throne, while misgovernment, ruinous taxation, famine and civil war had all taken their deadly toll from a population which, at the best of times, lived on a narrow margin between starvation and a precarious sufficiency. There was no resistance left in the people when the Manchus arrived. Many accepted them as the saviours of the country.

The last emperor of the Ming dynasty to reign at Peking was an honourable and well-meaning man. But in spite of the best intentions he was quite unable to cope with the situation as he found it. His grandfather had been a libertine and a degenerate, who paved the way for the fall of his dynasty; his own father was poisoned by powerful eunuchs after a short reign of only two months, and his brother, whom he succeeded, was a foolish man, who had left the government to unworthy subordinates while he played at carpentry and pretended to be a workman. In the circumstances it was hardly to be expected that Chung Chen, the last legitimate Ming emperor, should have restored prosperity. He did his best, but his best was a poor substitute for the strong hand of a vigorous ruler. When decision and determination were needed Chung Chen vacillated from one policy to another without being able to strike at the heart of the evil.

It was during his reign that the Manchus invaded China for the first time on a large scale and camped outside the walls of Peking. Although they made no attempt to take the city, they pillaged the countryside before returning to

the north. Every year they broke through the mountain-passes at one point or another and invaded a portion of Northern China, creating in this way a feeling of terror in the hearts of the people and destroying their hopes of a peaceful future. Despair produced an apathy which played as great a part in the eventual defeat of those loyal to the Mings as did the weapons of the enemy. The supine central government was powerless before the constant threat of invasion because the unfortunate emperor was temperamentally unfitted to cope with the double task of strengthening his own position and, at the same time, of holding the Manchus in check.

The curse of the Ming dynasty were the eunuchs, who had gradually been allowed to assume high positions in the state, such as adviser to the throne and other posts of similar importance. During the declining years of the dynasty their power had increased until the entire machinery of government was virtually in their cruel hands. Positions and honours ceased to be the rewards of merit and instead were given to those who paid the most for them. Honest men groaned under this iniquitous system of bribery which deprived them and their children of their heritage. The country as a whole suffered no less than the individual. The defences were neglected, walls and forts crumbled away for lack of repair and the money received from the crushing taxes, instead of being paid to the soldiers and used for the renewing of equipment, went into the pockets of the eunuchs. Many of them accumulated vast wealth which enabled them to lead a life of luxury at the expense of the state, whereas the emperor was continually short of money and there were never any funds available for essential expenditures. As a result the soldiers threw down their arms and refused to fight for a dynasty which would neither pay them nor reward them.

The Manchus themselves attributed their ultimate success to the intrigues of the eunuchs, who paralysed the efforts made by able and loyal generals to save the throne. At the beginning of his reign, Chung Chen had made a feeble attempt to rid himself of the eunuchs, whom he called "remnants of men", but as he was unable to pursue a consecutive policy for any length of time he eventually recalled them and reinstated them in the positions which

they had formerly found so lucrative. After this conditions went from bad to worse and when a revolt against the Ming dynasty broke out in the western part of the empire all efforts to check it were doomed to failure in advance, because so many of the generals serving with the army were eunuchs. They were indifferent as to which side they served as long as their own comfort was assured and they were allowed to retain their possessions. This proved to be a short-sighted policy and in the end they paid heavily for their treachery. When Peking fell the eunuchs were plundered and some of them tortured until they, too, like other prominent persons, gave up their wealth and treasure.

Nature herself appeared to play a part in the fall of the Ming dynasty, because during the reigns of the last emperors droughts and floods followed by famine devastated the land. When the Yellow River overflowed its banks and the people died of starvation by the millions transportation broke down. All efforts to relieve distress came to nothing. The eunuchs stole the grain which was dispatched to the relief of the afflicted provinces and sold it for their own profit. When conditions were at their worst and the people felt they could bear no more, civil war increased their miseries a hundred-fold. The revolt against the Mings, which started in a small way in the western provinces, spread eastward with alarming rapidity until many of the cities of the north were in the hands of the rebels and Peking itself was menaced.

Li Tzu-ch'eng, the leader of the rebellion, was an outstanding personage in an age when universal disintegration offered unusual opportunities of advancement to the bold and unscrupulous. He was himself the victim of conditions and through him retribution overtook the system which had destroyed his means of livelihood. As a young man he had inherited the position of village headman, as well as a comfortable property, from his father. It was his duty to collect the taxes from the peasants and pay them to the government tax-collector. The year that Li Tzu-ch'eng took over the post there had been a failure of the harvest because of drought and the farmers were unable to pay. No allowance was made by the government for this misfortune and Li Tzu-ch'eng was held responsible for the defaulting peasants in his district. In an attempt to pay this debt, he sold his own property and borrowed what he

could until, pressed by both the government agents and his own creditors, he found himself in imminent danger of arrest. Not wishing to forfeit his life he escaped to the hills and turned bandit, vowing to be revenged on the government which had ruined him.

A good soldier and possessing some of the qualities of the successful politician, Li appeared well suited to the life he had been forced to adopt. In appearance he was tall and powerfully built, with short bushy hair, a small aquiline nose, and yellow teeth. The loss of one eye from an arrow gave him a forbidding appearance, but he considered his disfigurement auspicious, as an ancient prophecy had foretold that the empire would be conquered by a one-eyed man. After he left home he offered his services to a robber chief who was soon after captured by the imperial forces. Li managed to escape but was obliged to go into hiding for several years until the affair was forgotten. During this period of enforced idleness he improved his education by studying history and the classics so that when he emerged from retirement he had become something of a scholar.

In the year 1640 he became the leader of his own band of brigands and gathered together under his standard desperate and dissatisfied men. From that time onward, until after his conquest of Peking, he enjoyed almost uninterrupted success. As his army increased in size, no force was sufficiently strong to halt his progress. When he defeated an imperial army sent against him the days of the Ming dynasty were numbered.

In an era of notoriously cruel bandit chiefs the army of ruffians led by Li Tzu-ch'eng was second to none in its systematic campaign of destruction. Followed by an enormous number of courtesans and slaves the fighting men pillaged the country through which they passed. No provisions of any sort were carried with them; necessities and luxuries were supplied by plunder. Any city which lay in their path and which held out against them was destroyed when taken and the inhabitants butchered with the utmost brutality. If a river ran near the city the unhappy people were driven by thousands into the water to drown while soldiers, standing along the banks, shot down those who attempted to escape. Afterwards a garrison was stationed in the devastated city, so that the country could not rise in

the rear of the rebel army, which continued its victorious march towards the sea.

Sometimes Li Tzu-ch'eng would establish his court in one of the cities he had taken and for a short time allowed himself the pleasure of pretending to be an emperor. He loved magnificence and could at times be both liberal and just. His appreciation of art made him surround himself with artists and scientists with whom he enjoyed conversing. But his cruelty increased with his power and his ungovernable rages became notorious. When he was angry no man's life was safe. Every day horrible scenes took place in his presence. Men were hanged, burned alive, or cut into a thousand pieces to satisfy the whim of the tyrant. Age or sex made no difference, young and old were slaughtered without pity. The words of a Han chronicler, describing a tyrant of antiquity, could with equal truth have been applied to him: "When he conquered a city not a mouth was left to chew."

In his palace at Peking the Ming emperor lived in deadly fear. Every day brought him reports of the advance of the rebels and the defeat of the imperial forces. He might have saved himself, but he could make no decision and he knew not where to go. Indecisive and wavering even in the midst of calamity, he turned from one adviser to another, while he issued futile edicts to mitigate taxation in a desperate attempt to conciliate the apathetic people. It was even too late to have his proclamations circulated throughout the country, for the rebels were advancing nearer and nearer to Peking.

An effort was made at the last moment to save the heir-apparent by dressing him in peasant's clothes and sending him out of the palace in disguise. However, like all other measures undertaken at this time, it was useless, as the young man escaped from the city only to fall into the hands of the rebels. After his son had left him, and the battering-rams of the enemy could be heard outside the gates, the emperor called the women of the palace to him and told them that the moment had come to die. Some tried to escape but, with his own hand, the emperor slew his daughters while the empress hanged herself and many of the ladies threw themselves into the lake.

The palace was now deserted. Ministers, attendants, and

eunuchs had all fled, leaving the doors unguarded, the vast halls and courtyards empty. The emperor wandered from place to place vainly seeking a way out, but the gates were barred against him and more than once he was shot at by the rebel soldiers. Realizing that the end had come, he resolved to die. Accompanied by one faithful eunuch, who had remained with him through the terror of the past few days, he made his way to a hill overlooking the city and there committed suicide. He realized that he had made a miserable failure of his life and that he had had no aptitude for the task which had been thrust upon him. As a last attempt to exonerate himself in the eyes of posterity, he wrote a farewell message on the lapel of his coat. It was found after his death.

“Poor in virtue and of contemptible personality, I have incurred the wrath of God on high. My ministers have deceived me. I am ashamed to meet my ancestors ; and therefore I myself take off my crown, and with my hair covering my face, await dismemberment at the hands of the rebels. Do not hurt a single one of my people.” (1)

Only his death could have saved the emperor from being taken prisoner. Hardly had he expired when Li Tzu-ch'eng entered the city in triumph and proclaimed himself the founder of a new dynasty. As flames swept over the ancient city and destroyed palaces as well as the homes of the humble, the rebel leader fulfilled the ancient prophecy that the empire would be conquered by a one-eyed man.

And yet the omens were not favourable when Li Tzu-ch'eng entered the Forbidden City by the southern gate, called the Gate of Heaven's Grace, which was reserved for the use of the emperor alone. In a spirit of bravado, or perhaps because after committing the supreme blasphemy of calling himself Emperor and Son of Heaven no other blasphemy mattered, the former bandit shot an arrow at the character *t'ien*, signifying heaven, which was painted over the gate. Doubtless his hand shook, because he missed the mark, and therefore in his moment of victory both he and his superstitious followers believed that heaven had indicated displeasure and that his race was run.

And so it proved to be, because the rebel leader, like many other great conquerors, forgot his caution and commenced to make mistakes. When his soldiers took a certain

slave girl prisoner, it seemed but a small matter at the time. How could he know that she was one of those strange women of destiny who change the fate of nations? He did not know, neither did he stop to inquire, and when he held her as his prisoner he sealed the fate of his short-lived dynasty.

The Round-faced Beauty was the name of the girl who unwittingly played such a decisive role in the history of her country. She had begun her career as a slave in the house of a nobleman and it is possible that she had been one of those unfortunate children who, in times of famine, were sold by their parents in exchange for food. Her duties in the nobleman's house included serving his guests with food and wine. It was at a banquet in the house of her master that Wu San Kuei, the famous Chinese general, saw her lovely face for the first time. He looked upon her with desire and the next day she was sent to him as a gift.

A passion born of wine and of the moment might have faded with the light of day, but it was not so. The Round-faced Beauty continued to charm her lord. She was made a concubine by her lover and given an honourable place among the ladies of his household. Henceforth she was called the Lady Ch'en and wore fine silk garments and had kingfisher feathers to adorn her hair. What time he could spare from his duties, the general passed at her side.

But the times were perilous ; Wu San Kuei was a soldier and before long he was ordered to the frontier to guard the northern passes against the Manchus. He left Peking in command of 200,000 of the best troops which remained loyal to the effete Ming dynasty. Had Wu San Kuei been supported from the rear, and had his strong policy not been interfered with by the advance of the rebels on Peking, his forces, which far outnumbered the Manchus, might have checked their advance into China for an indefinite period. But when Peking was in danger of immediate capture, Wu San Kuei was ordered to return with his army and undertake the defence of the city. The internal situation had become more dangerous than the threat of an invasion from the north and Wu had no choice but to obey. As he was making his preparations to march to the relief of the city, word reached him that the capital was in the hands of the rebels, that the Ming dynasty had fallen, and that the emperor was dead.

Wu San Kuei found himself in a difficult position. On the northern frontier were the Manchus, armed and threatening. The rebel army in occupation of Peking cut off his supplies from the south. Caught between two opposing armies his own forces were in danger of annihilation and he was obliged to make terms with one or the other. His inclination was to join with the rebels. His father and all the women of his household, with the exception of the Round-faced Beauty, were in their hands. Her fate was as yet unknown to him; he had received word that she had last been seen leaving the doomed city on horseback in an attempt to reach his camp. The heart of the fiery general was torn with anxiety. He could make no decision which might endanger the life of his beloved.

It was at this crucial moment that the rebel leader made his fatal mistake. His soldiers had seized the Round-faced Beauty as she was leaving the city and made her a prisoner. Prudence dictated that he return her to her lord, but instead he sent a letter to Wu San Kuei saying that the Lady Ch'en, as well as all the other women of the general's household, had been given to the captured Ming heir-apparent "to dally with as he pleases".

Wu San Kuei was furious. His anger and his wounded pride burned to be revenged. Immediate action against the man who had humiliated him had become a necessity and his moment of uncertainty was over. Without further hesitation he communicated with Prince Jui, the Manchu regent, and offered to place himself and his fine army unreservedly at the disposal of the men from the north. As a sign of good faith and his own allegiance, he adopted Manchu dress and shaved his head in order that the Manchu "pigtail" should have a chance to grow.

To have his bannermen reinforced by the soldiers of Wu San Kuei was a stroke of good fortune which Prince Jui had not expected. The two armies were soon united and together they swept against the rebels, who believed themselves to be firmly installed in Peking. In an attempt to save himself, Li Tzu-ch'eng sent the Round-faced Beauty to the camp of his rival, but too late. The rebels were forced to fly from Peking before the combined forces of their enemies. Pursued, defeated, and all their plunder taken from them, the forces under the command of Li Tzu-ch'eng

were in the end destroyed. If the rebel leader himself escaped from the slaughter, his fate was unknown. He had ceased to have any political significance when the Manchu regent and Wu San Kuei, now his friend and ally, entered the capital in triumph.

Wu San Kuei was given the title of Prince Pacificator by the Manchus and fought under their standard until the last of the Mings were ingloriously defeated in the southern provinces. When the war was over he was made viceroy of two provinces in the south, where far removed from the court he could do as he liked without interference. From the Manchus he received rank, wealth, and power, but the happiness he had once had with his Round-faced Beauty was lost to him for ever. Like so many other Chinese women she valued her virtue more than her life, and when dishonour came to her during the sack of Peking she felt she could never again resume her place in the general's household. By her own wish she entered a convent and became a Buddhist nun.

III

THE BOY WHO BECAME AN EMPEROR

It was a year after the dramatic events which led to the fall of Peking and the invasion of China by the Manchus that the boy-emperor Shun-chih was brought from his northern home and placed on the Dragon throne by his uncle, the regent. The boy had no wish to rule over the vast empire to which he had fallen heir. He was but a child of six years old, a pawn in the game for power. But his presence in Peking was indispensable to the Manchus for he was the visible proof that the Ming dynasty had fallen and that the era of the Ch'ing or Manchu dynasty had begun.

Before Shun-chih had been chosen to succeed his father as emperor of the Manchus, he had merely been a younger son of no especial importance in the dynastic succession. His mother was Bochita, a Mongol princess, a wife to T'ai Tsung, the powerful warrior emperor of the Manchus. A tradition persisting down the years attributed to Shun-chih illegitimate birth. It was said that his real father was not the emperor but a poor Chinese hunter whom Bochita had taken into her service some time before the birth of her child. If the story was true it received no confirmation from the actions of T'ai Tsung, who appeared to be proud of the boy.

When Shun-chih was four years old he accompanied the court on a hunting expedition, a great test of endurance for a child so young. At that time he delighted the clansmen with his courage and daring. In many ways he was far in advance of the other boys of his age : he could lift heavy weights and he enjoyed distinguishing himself in games and sports. But no one ever thought of him as the future emperor. T'ai Tsung was a strong, vigorous man and he had eight sons older than Shun-chih, any one of whom he could choose to be his successor. This being the case, no restrictions were placed on the actions of the boy who, being the healthy young son of a secondary wife, was allowed to gallop about on his pony after the stag and do very much as he pleased.

The following year the happy carefree days of the boy's life were over. His father T'ai Tsung died suddenly while sitting upright in his chair of state ; one moment he had been talking with his ministers, the next his body lay limp and lifeless in the chair. Occupied with the concerns of his busy career and always dominated by his dream of conquest, he had never thought to name a successor nor leave any instructions regarding the future. Now he was dead and all over his wide domain the clansmen mourned the loss of a great leader.

During the confusion that followed the death of T'ai Tsung his brother Prince Jui claimed the regency for himself, and excluding the eight older sons he chose his youngest nephew Shun-chih to reign as emperor of the Manchus. The dynastic records of the time explain this *coup d'état* by saying that Prince Jui was given the regency because he was unquestionably the one best able to rule. This was quite true, as he was an exceptionally capable man, but after his death a few years later he was accused of having plotted to obtain the throne for himself. It seems possible in the light of this subsequent evidence that he had grasped the power and placed a child on the throne in order to rid himself of the boy before the latter had reached an age when he would claim his rights. But whatever were the reasons for this drastic action, the fact remains that Shun-chih, through no choice of his own, became emperor.

When the period of mourning for T'ai Tsung was over the long-conceived plans were put in working order and the final preparations were completed for the conquest of China. Prince Jui was ready to leave Mukden at the head of his army. Before his uncle departed the young emperor invested him with the seal and patent of his office as commander of the troops and regent of the Manchu empire. This was the first official act of the new reign and it was treated as an occasion of unusual solemnity. In a well-prepared edict Shun-chih informed his soldiers that as he could not lead them himself because of his extreme youth he had requested his uncle to take his place.

Besides the patent and seal of his office, Prince Jui received a long list of rare and costly presents consisting of a canopy of imperial yellow, two dragon banners, a cap of fox skins, a sable rug and dragon robes, all of which were suitable

to his exalted position in the state. Shun-chih appeared clothed in dragon robes himself. During the ceremony he conducted himself with extraordinary poise and with a dignity far beyond his years. The clansmen were pleased with the handsome face and erect bearing of their young emperor ; they predicted that he would become a great warrior like his father and that under his leadership Manchu arms would penetrate to the farthest corner of the known world. At the last moment a final order was sent to the army, which was supposed to have been dictated by the boy-emperor himself. It read :—

“ Let there be complete harmony among you, so that success may be achieved and the august shades of the mighty dead be comforted. Be reverent ! ” (1)

Be reverent ! That was to be the keynote of the new reign although, at the time, the subjects of Shun-chih were far from suspecting it. How early in his life the priests gained control of his thoughts and imagination is not known. Perhaps while his armies were advancing towards Peking, because during that period he remained behind in the care of his mother Bochita, a woman strongly influenced by the lamas, the Buddhist priests of the Mongols and Tibetans. All through the life of Shun-chih the lamas were by his side as his constant companions, and many of the edicts issued during his reign referred to some measure regarding the priesthood. Fragments that have survived from his own writings reflect the great influence of the lamas and how his religious outlook was entirely moulded by them.

Bochita probably did not mean her boy to lead a religious life, especially as she had consented to his being proclaimed emperor, but she was a clever woman and it is possible that secretly she distrusted her brother-in-law, the regent, and thought that the lamas might be able to protect her son in case of need. In the background there was always the remote but amazingly powerful figure of the Dalai Lama, the spiritual head of the Buddhists. Negotiations had long been in progress for an alliance between Tibet and the Manchu empire, and the Dalai Lama was in a position to play a part behind the scenes. Through his envoys the lamas, who could be found everywhere from the poorest hamlet to the palace itself, he was able to send instructions to the mother of the emperor and, if he chose,

promise her and her son protection in return for obedience. In the meanwhile, the lamas worked upon the mind of the young boy and in time changed his character and diverted him from his apparent destiny. Shun-chih, intended by nature to be a future warrior, became instead a man of peace.

The news of the fall of the Ming dynasty arrived in the north first as a rumour which was only later confirmed as authentic. It did not become a reality to the eager boy until he was taken on his long journey south. There were no stags to hunt, no ponies to ride on this occasion. He travelled slowly as an emperor should, in a covered palanquin, or Sedan chair as it was later called in Europe. Before and behind him rode many armed retainers, ready to fight should the occasion arise, for the journey was a dangerous one, made chiefly through country not wholly pacified. Only towards the close, almost at the very end, was the way prepared as was customary and the road strewn with the traditional yellow sand.

As the boy-emperor peeped between the curtains of his chair he marvelled at the beauty of the countryside through which he travelled. He must have passed near Jehol, which was later to be the summer playground of the Manchu emperors and which was to occupy such an important place in their lives. The boy would have liked to stop long enough to fish in one of the clear, running streams or rest for a while in the cool shade of a tree, but this slight relaxation was denied him. He was an emperor now, so his attendants told him, with the duties and obligations of an emperor. The pleasant days of his too short youth were over. Fortunately he could not see into the future and he did not know, as he was being carried to his new home, that he was exchanging the free open-air life of a Manchu nobleman for the semi-imprisonment of a Chinese emperor behind the forbidding walls of the palace at Peking.

Little has been found in the records of the period about the first few years which the boy passed at Peking. As he was not of age his power was for the moment negligible. The task of subduing and consolidating the Chinese empire went steadily forward under the able guidance of the regent, while the army under the leadership of the Chinese general Wu San Kuei was in constant warfare with the small

scattered forces which remained faithful to the Mings. For the next few years a succession of weak Ming emperors attempted to establish a court first at Nanking and later at Foukien. One succeeded another with great rapidity, while a few gallant officers wasted themselves and their men in an attempt to resist the Manchus. The southern Mings had little claim to the title of emperor beyond a distant relationship to the branch of the family that had formerly reigned at Peking. They were dissolute men, who cared a great deal about pleasure and very little about anything else. When the last of these southern rulers was taken prisoner and murdered on his way to Peking, all opposition to the Manchus crumbled. With no acknowledged leader to follow, the Chinese people as a whole accepted the terms offered to them by the Manchus, gave up their arms and settled down to the pursuits of peace.

The final agreement showed that concessions had been made on both sides. Ingrained in the hearts of the Chinese people was the status of their women and this attitude the Manchus wisely respected. Chinese women were not obliged to change their form of dress nor give up binding their feet. According to the new law no Manchu, not even the emperor, could take one of them into his household. Later this law was modified to the extent that when a Manchu did marry a Chinese woman the children of the union were to be brought up as Manchus.

The restrictions imposed on the men were, on the contrary, considered harsh: they were compelled to adopt the Manchu form of dress, to shave the front part of their heads, and allow the remainder of the hair to grow until it was sufficiently long to wear in a queue. This order was greatly resented by the Chinese, who considered it an indignity and a badge of servitude. Many committed suicide rather than obey it. Chinese men, however, retained the privilege of being buried in the traditional garments of the Ming period. As a further concession to the pride of their Chinese subjects, it was agreed by the Manchus that the highest rank in the great competitive triennial examinations for public service should be given in future to a Chinese contestant as it had been in the past, provided that he was worthy to receive it.

Many of the new laws made by the regent in the name of

the emperor were beneficial : the power of the eunuchs was curtailed and such drastic regulations were made against them that they were prevented from holding high office for 150 years. Capable Chinese officials were left in control of the civil administration, which remained much as it had formerly been under the Mings except that the laws were more justly administered and, with the departure of the eunuchs, bribery and "squeeze" diminished. In addition, and in order to pacify the people, ceremonies and sacrifices were officially performed at the tombs of the Ming emperors and a great mausoleum was built to indicate the place where lay the body of the last legitimate Ming ruler, who had died by his own hand at the time of the fall of Peking. By the remission of harsh forms of taxation and in other ways modifying the burdens of the people the regent, during the minority of his nephew Shun-chih, brought peace and a certain measure of stability to the chaotic empire which his armies had conquered. The Chinese people might not be in sympathy with all the new laws imposed upon them, but they accepted the situation and adapted themselves to it with a measure of goodwill. On the other hand the regent never allowed them to forget that the Manchus were in control of the state and that any attempt at rebellion would be ruthlessly suppressed.

When the young emperor reached the age of thirteen, Prince Jui was killed in a hunting accident. It was perhaps a fortunate event for Shun-chih because of the subsequent revelations that the regent had been plotting to seize the throne. This was a grave offence. As a result his sons lost their high rank and his own name was removed from the ancestral tablets. After these alarming disclosures Shun-chih was unwilling to have another regent appointed ; a great council of state was held at which it was decided that the young emperor, in spite of his inexperience, should take over the government of the empire himself.

IV

THE MYSTERY OF SHUN-CHIH

The young emperor who unobtrusively but firmly made himself master of the state at the age of thirteen had changed considerably in character during the years which he had already passed within the walls of the Forbidden City. This descendant of nomad warriors, who had once delighted in hunting the stag and who as a child had demonstrated his skill with bow and arrow, had become a quiet, contemplative young man. He surrounded himself with scholars and carried on long discussions with Buddhist priests on the disputed points in the sutras. For the luxuries and pleasures which former emperors had found irresistible, he cared not at all. The frivolous satellites of the former Ming dynasty found his court a dull place; the extravagant days of the eunuchs had passed with the coming of a master who had no use for corrupt and degenerate men.

Early in his reign Shun-chih established the custom of riding through the streets of the city accompanied by his nobles. The people liked the pageantry that attended his public appearances, the silk robes of the mandarins, the fine horses, umbrellas, banners, and silk streamers, even though the streets were cleared before he approached and no one was allowed to watch from windows or doorways. In spite of this his public appearances made him popular with the people and it was soon learned that any of his subjects could approach him when he gave audience. In taking these steps Shun-chih departed from the precedents created by former emperors, who had shut themselves in the palace, caring little for the distress of their subjects and spending their time with concubines and dancing girls.

Other and more serious matters occupied the mind of Shun-chih during the first few years of his reign. Two years after he had taken over the control of the government, the great Dalai Lama of Tibet, the spiritual head of the Buddhists, left his isolated mountain home to pay him a visit. This event made a lasting impression on Shun-chih and greatly influenced his future life. The Dalai Lama arrived at the time when contact between China and the

West had been firmly established by sea. The Dutch, known as the "red-headed people" who had occupied the island of Formosa, and the Russians, who wished to trade with China, had both sent ambassadors to the court of Peking. New thoughts and new ideas filtered into the country, but they were not allowed to take possession of the mind of the young emperor. He had been a devout Buddhist from his extreme youth and this visit of the Dalai Lama, coming as it did when he was seeing and hearing so much that was new and strange, bound him more firmly than ever to the faith of his fathers. He was ever tolerant of other religions and thoughtfully listened to their teachings, but he always remained unconvinced.

The learned and courteous Jesuit missionaries, who had entered China at the close of the preceding century and had established a footing at the court of the last Ming emperor, were always received with favour by the liberal-minded young monarch. They hoped to convert him to Christianity and then, with his help, spread their teachings throughout the length and breadth of the empire. The emperor heard them with grave attention. They were men of learning and as such merited his respect. What they had to say interested him greatly. He was even reported by one of these missionaries to have shed tears when told the story of the death of Christ, but in spite of the tears, he never committed himself to their belief. Astute and clever men though they were, the Jesuits failed to realize that in striving for the soul of Shun-chih they were fighting the organized power of the Buddhists, represented by the person of the all-powerful Dalai Lama. The Jesuits were but an isolated handful of men in an alien land ; their adversary, although unseen, always had ways and means at his disposal of which they, educated in the West and unaccustomed to the subtle web of oriental intrigue, were never even aware.

The missionary who exerted the strongest influence over the young emperor was Father Adam Schall, a gentle scholarly German Jesuit. Father Schall was a man of immense learning. He had been appointed to the office of royal astronomer and given the rank of a mandarin by the last Ming emperor, who had appreciated his talents and often delighted in his company. When the Ming dynasty fell and the rebels captured the city, Father Schall was the

only member of his Order residing in Peking. Chinese Christians, who loved him for his kind heart, sent horses and servants to take him to a place of safety, but he would not go. He watched the flames spread through the city and when the conflagration had almost reached his church it was checked as if by a miracle. All during the fighting he moved freely about, saving those he could and bringing comfort to many. It says much for the esteem in which he was held that during the sack of the city his house and church remained untouched.

When the Manchus arrived to build a new empire on the ruins of the old, Father Schall was ordered to leave Peking because the Manchus wanted the city for their own followers. As soon as he received the order he took immediate action to have it annulled. In his best style, and he was a master of the Chinese language, he sent a request to the new government asking that he be allowed to remain where he was. When it was learned that he had been formerly royal astronomer at the court of the Mings and was a scholar with peaceful intentions, his request was granted. It was through this petition that Father Schall made his first contact with the Manchus, and when the regent heard of his presence in the city he summoned him to court. During the minority of the young emperor, Father Schall went on quietly with his work, respected by all and making many converts. Only when Shun-chih attained his majority did the Jesuit become a power at court. Deprived of his own father at an early age, the emperor found a substitute in the Jesuit and it was not long before Adam Schall became both friend and adviser to the throne.

It was a real friendship, if a strange one. Shun-chih, breaking every established precedent, would leave the palace whenever he could and spend whole days in the house of the Jesuit priest, visiting the church, the garden, the library, and the sacristy like any other guest. He sat in so many different chairs that the Father was eventually obliged to remonstrate with him as it was a custom that no one should ever sit in a chair that had once been used by an emperor. Shun-chih laughed and told his friend to pay no attention to any such custom as that, and as a proof of his affection he took off his own fur-lined vest one cold day and wrapped it about the old man, saying that the latter was insufficiently

clad for such bitter weather. For hours at a time the emperor and Father Schall would talk together of the strange lands across the seas and of the curious habits and customs which existed in those lands. *Ma fa* was the name which Shun-chih gave to the Jesuit, a term which in the Manchu language signified Venerable Father.

Once more Father Schall was appointed royal astronomer and this time he was made a mandarin of the first class. His influence with the emperor was so great that Shun-chih would listen to him when he was heedless of the words of anyone else. He believed in the integrity of the missionary and once said to his courtiers :—

“ *Ma fa* is a man without equal. Other mandarins serve me only for their own advancement in life and they never cease to demand favours. *Ma fa* never requests anything for himself. He is content with having my good will. That is what I call being served with love and devotion.” (1)

Perhaps it was because Father Schall asked for so little for himself that it occurred to Shun-chih to honour the old man's ancestors. His father and grandfather, long since dead in Germany, were posthumously raised to the rank of mandarins. The emperor was acting according to the best traditions of filial piety when he chose this way to reward his friend. According to the teachings of Confucius, an illustrious descendant could raise the status of those members of his family who had preceded him. To make certain that posterity should know of the regard in which he held his Jesuit friend, Shun-chih wrote a long preamble in praise of him which was engraved in letters of gold on black marble. Below the inscription was a great tortoise carved out of white stone. This memorial to Father Schall was erected during his lifetime in the courtyard of the new church which the emperor had built for the Jesuits.

When ambassadors from foreign countries came to court Father Schall acted as interpreter. Shun-chih, who could not talk to them himself, would compose a list of questions which Father Schall would translate and carry to the foreign guests to answer. The emperor was very curious about these barbarians from distant lands and he wanted to know many things about them. How far was their country from China? Had their ruler as much power as himself? The Dutch ambassadors shivered in the cold night air when they left

their lodgings at two o'clock in the morning to be present at the emperor's first audience, which took place at the chilly hour of dawn, but Father Schall, speaking German to them, showed them where to go and what to do, creating in his person the link between East and West and explaining the strange customs of the former to the wondering minds of the latter.

The friendship between Father Schall and his imperial pupil might have continued with mutual advantage to both throughout the reign of Shun-chih had it not been for the subject of women. Because of the Jesuit's opposition to polygamy, practised as a matter of course by both Manchus and Chinese, he felt called upon to remonstrate with the emperor in regard to the imperial concubines. Shun-chih resented such interference and in time came to regard his former friend as a troublesome old man who disturbed him at his pleasures and reproached him for observing customs which seemed to him both right and proper. The Christian theory that monogamy was the only true form of marriage seemed strange and barbaric to Shun-chih, whose background and whose entire habit of thought were permeated by his acceptance of the system of multiple wives.

About the time of the memorable visit of the Dalai Lama, Shun-chih had been presented with a young woman as his empress who, although she was beautiful and of high birth, failed to please him. After a short time some breach of etiquette provided the excuse to reduce her in rank so that she became a concubine of the third class. The emperor had many other concubines who played but little part in his life at the time, although several bore him sons and one became the mother of his successor, the emperor K'ang Hsi.

A few years later, when the period of adolescence was over and the emperor had reached an age when love could compete in importance with the teachings of the priests, a young woman of great beauty was introduced into the court of the women. It was this woman who was destined to exert an even greater influence over him than that of the lamas or of the learned Father Schall. It was during the time when she reigned supreme in the palace that the break came between him and the Jesuit. The lady's name was Tung Kuei-fei, Tung being her family name and Kuei-fei her rank as a concubine. She never became empress,

although her imperial lover wished to honour her with that title. For some reason she was not considered eligible.

Legend surrounds the name of the beautiful Tung Kuei-fei with mystery, even as it surrounds so much that relates to the life of Shun-chih. It was whispered that she was not a Manchu lady of high rank, but a Chinese woman who could never become empress as such a union was contrary to the dynastic laws. Moreover, it was also reported that the antecedents of the lady were dubious. Previous to her introduction at court, so ran the story, she had belonged to the class of highly educated accomplished courtesans who were carefully trained in music, literature, and the arts. At that time she had been the mistress of a well-known poet who, when he lost her, wrote a lament and a biographical sketch of her charms, both of which have been preserved among the gems of seventeenth century Chinese literature. In the sketch the courtesan Tung is described as most highly accomplished in the arts of pleasing. She also excelled as a housewife in both cooking and needlework. While living in the house of her lover, her light fingers moved rhythmically in the complicated intricacies of serving tea, an art as subtle as that of writing verses, giving exquisite enjoyment to the æsthetic Chinese mind, trained as it was to detect shades and variations in the sensuous appreciation of all pleasures.

Engaged in these attractive pursuits, the courtesan Tung passed her days pleasantly, free to come and go as she pleased, for women of her class were not burdened by the restrictions imposed by custom upon virtuous women. She delighted in taking long, solitary rambles in the woods, meditating on the beauty of nature or lingering beside a stream while she composed *tui tzu*, the short verses beloved by the Chinese scholar. One day, when wandering far from home, she was captured by a roving band of Manchu soldiers who, when they realized the unusual beauty of their prize, took her to the palace and turned her over to the attendants of the emperor.

Once within the enclosure of the palace walls, this accomplished woman shed her old life as a snake sheds its skin. When next heard of she had acquired a different name and had blossomed anew as the favourite imperial

concubine. With her she brought love, life, and hope to the serious young monarch.

For some time before her arrival, Shun-chih had shown unmistakable signs of a growing desire to retire from the world. Despite his friendship with Father Schall and his warm interest in the religion of his friend, it was the teachings of the lama priests which filled his mind and he was conscious of strange longings which the women of the palace failed to dissipate. Sensitive, as courtiers always are to subtly changing conditions, it is possible that there were those who guessed the emperor's state of mind and therefore the famous courtesan was cleverly introduced into the life of the palace by the party at court opposed to the priests. That there was such a party is proved by the fact that only a few years later the lamas were driven from the palace. These courtiers may have thought that Tung Kuei-fei, a clever, experienced woman with sweetness of disposition and a charming manner was the very person to renew the emperor's interest in life. The results of their union proved satisfactory to everyone concerned except the lamas. Shun-chih forgot his desire to attain *nirvana* and lived only for his beautiful mistress, whose slightest wish had become his law.

Although Tung Kuei-fei had risen to the position of the emperor's favourite wife, she never took advantage of his love for her. Quietly and efficiently she took charge of his household, regulating the affairs of his daily life as any other capable woman would have done. In her hands his comfort was assured. Every night she went in person to see that the temperature of his bed-chamber was regulated to the best advantage so that it was neither too hot nor too cold. Although she never interfered in governmental matters, she insisted that Shun-chih attend with scrupulous attention to all the business of state. No longer could he hurriedly sign papers which had been presented to him by his ministers. His gentle tyrant insisted that he read each one through to the end. When she thought it expedient, she urged him to dine with his counsellors, although he preferred to be with her, away from the rigorous exactions and formal etiquette of his official life.

Under her loving domination he was really happy, perhaps for the first time since he had ascended the throne. He was able to convert the lady to his own way of thought and had

the joy of seeing her develop into a devout Buddhist. The greatest moment of their union was when she gave birth to a son. There were no clouds in the sky then, Shun-chih and his beloved were both young and life was before them. But the idolized child died in infancy to the despair of his father who had regarded him as his heir. He was beside himself with grief and Tung Kuei-fei was obliged to forget her own sorrow in an attempt to comfort him.

After the death of their son the delicate health of the Lady Tung gradually declined. The short hour of peace and happiness was over. No longer could she walk in the garden with her imperial lover and watch the flowers open their buds to the sun. No longer could they make excursions on the lake, thick with lily pads and lotus blossoms. All the wealth of the world could not give her back her health, as month by month she wasted away to the distress of the doctors, who could only prescribe expensive and complicated medicines which had not the slightest effect. The emperor watched her with despair growing weaker every day until scarcely four years after she entered the palace she died.

Shun-chih at the age of twenty-three was a broken-hearted man. He tried to kill himself but was prevented by his mother, the Mongol princess Bochita. To honour his beloved he ordered the construction of a great palace where her body could rest during the period of mourning. When the body in its coffin was burned, according to the custom of the Manchus, the palace in which it lay with all the treasures that Shun-chih had placed there, was burned with it. After the flames from the funeral pyre were extinguished, the ashes of Tung Kuei-fei were collected and placed in a great urn studded with precious stones.

In his deep despair the emperor wrote : "The future is as dark to me as the past out of which I have come." (2)

He could see no ray of light ahead. Only the teachings which he had formerly received from the Dalai Lama relieved the misery which clouded his mind. Again he studied and pondered over the Buddhist sutras until in time he came to see the way which he must follow, the solitary path which he must travel. Quietly and deliberately he made his great decision. The world would not approve of the step he was contemplating. The world must never know.

Less than six months after the death of his beloved

concubine an edict, issued from the palace, announced the death of Shun-chih.

The end came suddenly, the edict continued, after a short but severe attack of smallpox. To the lasting regret of his subjects, he had gone to join his ancestors in another world.

K'ang Hsi was the "reign-title" chosen for his son, the new emperor, an auspicious title meaning Unalterable Peace. As he was only seven years old, four regents had been appointed to govern for him during his minority. According to the edict all had been arranged with commendable foresight by Shun-chih for the welfare of the people and the future good of the state.

And so it came about that after a few short years, history was repeating itself. For the second time a child was chosen to be emperor of the Manchus and placed upon the ancient throne of the Chinese people. Little did any one dream that the accession of K'ang Hsi inaugurated a new era for the Middle Kingdom ; an era of expansion, of prosperity and of wise, paternal government. His reign began inauspiciously because he came to the throne at a moment when his dynasty was shaken by rumours regarding the death of his father.

Despite all precautions and the elaborate ceremonies which accompanied the official burial of Shun-chih, the news was whispered among his subjects that he had not died of smallpox as the edict issued from the palace had said. Instead he had abdicated, and had gone far away to live the life of a hermit under the protection of the Buddhist priests.

The truth of the matter will never be known. Those who shared the secret carried it with them to the grave, but by unravelling the many legends which have grown up about his name, the remaining years of the life of Shun-chih may be traced to the logical conclusion : that he did retire from the world. His ultimate fate was, perhaps, unimportant except for the invisible influence which he exerted over his son K'ang Hsi, one of the greatest monarchs who ever ruled the vast empire of China.

V

THE SAINT OF THE MANCHUS

To understand the reasons which inspired the emperor Shun-chih to abdicate in the year 1652, it is necessary to comprehend the part played by the Dalai Lama in his life and the bearing that this had on his ultimate decision. Even as a child the mysterious figure of the Dalai Lama had stimulated the young emperor's imagination. When this great personage left his Tibetan fortress to visit him at Peking, it confirmed him in his adherence to the Buddhist form of worship. Although the visit of the Dalai Lama had been arranged for political purposes in order to strengthen the alliance between Tibet and the Manchu empire, the results achieved were far different from those which had been anticipated. Clever diplomatists as were the Chinese, they met their equal when the Dalai Lama came to court.

Soon after the Manchu invasion of China an envoy had been sent to Tibet with presents for the two heads of the Buddhist priesthood, the Dalai Lama and the Tashi Lama. In the name of the emperor each one was invited to visit Peking. The presents consisted of girdles of gold set with jade, magnificent tea-urns, and other costly objects suitable for the use of such exalted dignitaries.

The Tashi Lama excused himself because of his advanced age. He was too old a man, he explained to the envoy, to undertake such a long and perilous journey of 3,000 miles over high mountain trails and across the inhospitable deserts. But the Dalai Lama, the more important of the two, accepted the invitation even though it was only very occasionally that a lama of the highest rank left his lamasery. The preparations for the journey took four years to complete, but time apparently meant nothing in a Buddhist lamasery in the mountains of Tibet, where the days and nights were passed in an unending chain of meditation and devotion. Even when the years of preparation had passed it was with extreme reluctance that the Dalai Lama set forth with a following of 3,000 men.

His steady advance after he left the Potala at Lhasa was in the nature of a triumphant procession. At each stopping

place thousands of the faithful gathered to receive his blessing. Gifts of every kind were brought to him as he continued on his way, crossing the dangerous mountain passes of Tibet and resting for a while at one monastery before continuing to another. Only a journey made by a Christian pope in the Middle Ages could have approached in significance this journey made by the Dalai Lama through the lands of his followers. It was said of him that he was one of those holy men so universally and reverently beloved that no man could find it in his heart to speak ill of him.

Hundreds of thousands of people left their homes and travelled great distances only to kneel by the wayside as his litter was carried past, while throughout Central Asia, from the barren wastes of the Gobi desert to the snow-covered peaks of the Himalayas, prayers were offered to the Buddha for his safe return. Many of the devout joined the procession which followed behind him so that when he reached Ordos, on the boundary of China, he was accompanied by a vast multitude of men and women.

From Ordos the Dalai Lama sent a letter to the emperor Shun-chih, which reached its destination three months later. In this letter he begged to be spared the fatigue of the remaining journey and requested the emperor to meet him at some half-way spot. His Manchu followers, who were devout Buddhists, urged Shun-chih to accede to this request, but his sceptical Chinese counsellors, wiser perhaps in the intricacies of Tibetan methods of negotiation, suggested that such a course would be beneath the dignity of the greatest ruler on earth. Although the emperor would have willingly travelled to Ordos or even beyond in order to throw himself at the feet of the master, he consented to remain in his capital and excused himself to the Dalai Lama, saying that he was obliged to keep in touch with his armies, which were still fighting against the southern Mings. In preparation for the arrival of his exalted guest the emperor ordered the construction of the great Yellow Temple, a copy of a Tibetan lamasery, outside the north wall of the city. While the work was in progress princes and mandarins of high rank were sent to meet the Dalai Lama and act as his escort on the remainder of his journey to Peking.

At length the day arrived when the young emperor received the Dalai Lama in audience. It was a moment for

which Shun-chih had been eagerly waiting. Although he had yielded to the request of his Chinese counsellors and had not gone to meet his guest, this had seemed to him at the time to have been almost a sacrilege. Now that the auspicious moment for the meeting had arrived, he was determined to receive the Dalai Lama with every possible sign of honour and respect. No foreign observer was present to leave a record of this historic occasion, but from the account of an eyewitness at a later meeting between a Grand Lama of Tibet and a Manchu emperor we learn that :—

“ The emperor met him at a distance of at least forty paces from the throne, and immediately stretching forth his hand, and taking hold of the Lama’s, led him towards the throne, where, after many salutations and expressions of affection and pleasure on both sides, the Lama was seated by the emperor upon the uppermost cushion with himself and at his right hand.” (1)

After the audience a state banquet was served and the Lama presented the emperor with a gift of fine horses which he had brought with him from Tibet.

When the first elaborate exchange of courtesies was over Shun-chih asked for religious instruction, and during the month that the Dalai Lama remained at Peking the emperor became his pupil or *chela*, as such a relationship is called in Tibet. This intimate personal contact with the spiritual head of the Buddhists made a deep and lasting impression on the young man. High lamas, such as this one, were clever men, well trained in the technique of influencing and controlling the minds of others. When the instruction commenced the two met as equals, the young emperor, the ruler of a great kingdom of this world, and the Dalai Lama, worshipped by millions as the reincarnation of the Buddha. This seeming equality did not last. Although the meeting had been arranged in order to bind the Dalai Lama, and through him the Tibetan people, closer to the expanding Manchu empire, it resulted in the young emperor coming under the influence of the Lama.

After the first audience many formalities were discarded because Shun-chih dispensed with court etiquette whenever he could and the Dalai Lama likewise cared little for ceremony. In the privacy of the apartment, where he received Shun-chih, he greeted his pupil dressed in a large red petticoat, a garment worn by all the priests of his sect.

The upper part of his massive body was clothed in a yellow sleeveless vest while a piece of coarse yellow cloth was thrown across his shoulders. On his feet were high red boots. A favoured disciple brought him food and attended to his needs during the periods of instruction. At such times the Dalai Lama spoke rapidly into the ear of the emperor, the young man repeating after him over and over again the truths he had learned until they were fast in his mind. Day by day the instruction continued until the importance of his kingdom in this world faded before the eyes of Shun-chih. From now onwards, having become an initiate in the mysteries of Lamaism, he regarded his duties to his empire merely as obligations which must be faithfully fulfilled until the day of his release arrived.

The Dalai Lama remained in Peking only a month after his first reception by the emperor. He then sent a memorial to the throne in which he stated that the climate of the city did not agree with him and he begged leave to return to his mountain home. Before he departed, a second public audience was given him followed by another state banquet. On this occasion it was the emperor who presented gifts as a token of his great respect and admiration. The Dalai Lama received saddle-horses, gold, silver, pearls, jade, and satin as well as a golden tablet inscribed with the characters *ta shan*, meaning "One of Great Virtue", which was the title the emperor himself had chosen for his guest.

It is significant that shortly after the visit of the Dalai Lama, Shun-chih issued an edict with reference to admission to the priesthood. According to the new law there was to be a discrimination made against men who desired to become monks but who had not previously married and become the fathers of sons. It was a law which Shun-chih himself followed scrupulously, because when he retired from the world and entered a monastery, he left behind him a son to perpetuate his name and dynasty.

During the years that passed between the visit of the Dalai Lama and the day when he abdicated in favour of his young son, the emperor did not hesitate to speak of the doubts which filled his mind, nor of his desire to lead the life of a recluse. At one time he wrote :—

"Vainly have I lived through one existence in the world of men." (2)

And again he said :—

“ I have yearned to become a devoted follower of the Lord Buddha.” (2)

A contemporary poet wrote of the emperor saying :—

“ He threw away the empire as one who casts away a worn-out shoe ; he rejected the sovereignty thrust upon him in this incarnation, and following the example of the Lord Buddha, preferred to seek the mystic solitudes.” (2)

As he grew older, even when his thoughts were occupied with his beautiful concubine and with the drama of love and death that was played to its tragic end within the palace walls, the emperor often meditated on the joys of living in some quiet retreat where his soul would find peace. As long as his beloved Tung Kuei-fei was beside him he was content to remain where he was, but when she died he felt that his day of release had arrived. He acquainted his ministers with his intention.

If Shun-chih wished to retire from the world, and no amount of argument seemed able to dissuade him from his purpose, there were grave reasons of state why it was imperative for his choice to be hidden from the people and the world at large be allowed to believe him dead. The ruler of a long-established dynasty might abdicate without fear of the consequences, but the Manchus had only recently conquered China and it would have seriously diminished their prestige in the eyes of their newly acquired subjects had it been known that their emperor had relinquished his throne. Moreover, his preference for the life of a recluse would never have been understood by the hard-headed, realistic Chinese people, who held their own Buddhist priests, the bonzes, in little esteem.

As the ministers of the crown thought it wiser not to announce the abdication of the emperor to the people, the only course left open to them was to proclaim him dead. While the body of an unknown man was buried amid much pomp and ceremony, Shun-chih, with the consent and help of his ministers, was able to slip from the palace. In the disguise of a monk he passed through the great gates which closed after him for ever. A moment more and he had disappeared, his sombre figure only one of many sombre

figures, pushed back by the soldiers to make way for the emperor's long funeral procession.

For a while he lingered in the great city, as one of the throng that filled the busy streets. So much was new and strange to him, for hitherto he had only seen it as a spectator from the windows of his palanquin, or from the back of a horse as he rode swiftly through the narrow thoroughfares surrounded and guarded by armed men. There was so much he wanted to learn for himself. Like the Buddha before him who, when he heard of sickness and death for the first time, left his palace to share the sufferings of mankind, Shun-chih looked about him and marvelled at what he saw.

He had another reason for prolonging his stay in the city. He had promised his ministers to remain there until he had witnessed the inauguration of his son, the emperor K'ang Hsi. Somewhere near the route which led from the Forbidden City to the Temple of Heaven the father waited quietly to ascertain that the litter of his son was brought forth from the palace. Did he remember, as he waited, that long journey of years gone by when he himself had been carried from his northern home to the capital of the lately conquered empire of the Mings? Did he recall the days of his extreme youth when he had been obliged to forego the joys of hunting in order to hold tedious audiences at dawn while sitting on the stately throne of a fallen dynasty? Who knows what thoughts passed through the mind of the lonely man whose face was hidden behind a monk's cowl? He had scarcely need even of that protection as he moved about the city. Who would have recognized a Son of Heaven in the shabby, sad-coloured robes of the priest? Then, when the last link in the chain of duty which held him to the world had been forged and he knew that the future of his son was secure, he left the city never to return.

Although every precaution had been taken, the secret of the abdication gradually became known during the long years the Manchu dynasty occupied the throne of China. Many believed it but few dared mention it until the present day, when the Manchu dynasty has ceased to exist and the censorship it imposed is only a memory of the past. Modern writers, no longer deterred by fear, freely state their disbelief in the death of Shun-chih at the age of twenty-three.

The legends connected with his life as a monk all differ. No one monastery can produce undisputed claim to having been the sanctuary of the fugitive emperor. The mystery which surrounded his birth and later his abdication pursued him into that twilight-world which he had adopted as his own. One account states that he found refuge in a monastery in the Wu-t'ai mountains, one of the four holy mountains of China. If this is so, it was an appropriate destination for one in search of peace. The story of his arrival at the monastery and his subsequent life there runs as follows (3):—

One evening, soon after the time when the emperor Shun-chih had disappeared from the palace, a stranger knocked at the door of the monastery. He arrived at the solemn moment when the monks were praying for the soul of the departed emperor, a moment which must have been filled with emotion for the visitor, had that visitor been none other than Shun-chih. The venerable abbot greeted him kindly. He was a man who had had long experience in dealing with the souls and hearts of men and he realized at once that there was something unusual about his guest. Inviting him to enter a private room, he questioned him closely regarding his name and station.

"I beg you not to press me for details," the young man said. "I have come here to enroll myself as your disciple. If you agree, accept me as such ; if not I will go elsewhere."

The abbot hesitated. His guest was of distinguished appearance and his dignity of bearing proclaimed him a leader of men. Surely, such a one could not be destined for a life of renunciation and abstinence. But the young man was determined, and when the abbot found that his knowledge of the Buddhist scriptures was beyond that of ordinary men, he could do no less than accept him as a member of the order. The stranger was given the name of Hui-chen. At his own request he was allowed to retire to a cell in a hermitage which was connected with the monastery by a steep path.

The strange monk spent his days in study, his nights in meditation and prayer. Deeply read in Buddhist and Confucian literature, he gave little thought to the affairs of the world. Only at long intervals did an event of national importance reach his ears and awaken some slight interest. The austerity of his life aroused the jealousy of the other

monks, but the old abbot reproved them, saying that one day the stranger would bring honour and glory to them all.

The hermit monk Hui-chen might have lived and died in the monastery undiscovered by the world had it not been that many years later the emperor K'ang Hsi decided to visit the Wu-t'ai mountains. Accompanied by his grandmother, the empress dowager, he set forth from Peking. The empress dowager did not accompany him all the way. Instead, she waited at the foot of the mountain while the emperor went on alone. At the monastery all had been prepared for his reception. The halls and cells had been cleaned, the walls repaired and the roads put in order. The emperor entered the building through rows of kneeling monks and made his way directly to the great altar where he burned incense before the image of the Buddha.

When he had finished his devotions he turned to the abbot and asked :

"Are the monks all here ? "

The abbot answered in the affirmative but the emperor did not appear to be satisfied.

"I have heard of a certain strange monk," he continued. "Where is he ? "

"He lives," replied the abbot, "in a hermitage on a high summit. Pilgrims come and go but no one ever sees him."

The emperor expressed his intention of visiting the hermit and the abbot could not refuse him a guide to show him the way. Leaving the monastery on foot accompanied by one young novice, K'ang Hsi made his way along the steep mountain path. Up and up they climbed until they reached the top of the mountain where the sanctuary of the strange monk was hidden. Entering a cheerless cell, the emperor saw before him the man he had come so far to seek. Wrapped in deep meditation, the strange monk seemed unaware that anyone had entered his retreat.

The emperor gazed longingly into the face of the recluse whose identity appeared known to him. Then, throwing himself on his knees, he begged for some look or word of recognition.

The strange monk hearing a voice opened his eyes and looked about him in confusion, for he was not used to intrusions, and his thoughts had been far away.

"I do not understand you," he murmured, addressing

the emperor who remained prostrate before him. "I do not understand you," he repeated. "The world and I have nothing to do with each other."

Try as he could, K'ang Hsi could not penetrate the reticence of this man whom he so firmly believed to be his father. He spoke of the love which he, his son, bore him ; of the empress dowager waiting patiently at the foot of the mountain pass.

"The emperor is mistaken," said the strange monk again and again. "I know nothing of these things."

K'ang Hsi remained for a long time kneeling at the feet of the silent figure. Wistfully he looked into his face and sadly and reluctantly he rose to his feet and took his leave. In tragic silence he made his way back, only speaking once to caution his guide against revealing anything he had heard or seen.

Soon afterwards he left the monastery to rejoin the empress dowager and when he returned to Peking large sums of money were sent from the court to the remote retreat in the high mountains. The monastery which had harboured the strange monk grew surprisingly rich.

In after years the emperor paid other visits to this same place, and on each occasion he climbed the steep path alone to the summit and silently gazed upon the face of the man who remained there in prayer. His interest in the monks and the many benefits he heaped upon them seemed to confirm the legend that the lonely hermit of the Wu-t'ai mountains was none other than the founder of his dynasty, the former emperor Shun-chih.

But there are other monasteries scattered throughout the Chinese empire which claim to have sheltered the emperor Shun-chih. These places are visited every year by long lines of pilgrims who pray before some relic supposed to have been used by this mysterious man. At T'ien T'ai-ssu there is the statue of an abbot which is claimed by many to be the embalmed body of the emperor. The figure is clothed in yellow dragon robes and is reported to bear a strong resemblance to a portrait of Shun-chih. According to tradition, K'ang Hsi presented the dragon robes as well as gold and jewels to be buried in the tomb. Every story which tells of the retirement to a monastic life of the emperor Shun-chih includes, as part of the tale, the tender, filial

piety of his son who appears to have made many uneasy journeys in search of the father whom he had lost.

Bereaved of both father and mother in his early youth, K'ang Hsi was obliged to transform his love for his parents into a greater love for his people. In the *Sacred Edict*, a book of maxims which he wrote for the benefit of posterity, he records the duties which a son owed his father : duties which he himself was never given the opportunity to fulfill.

Although the emperor Shun-chih was a man who lived but a short time among his fellows, his memory remained alive and glowing in the hearts of his descendants. It might be said that he sacrificed himself for the good of his dynasty, because as long as his children and grandchildren remained faithful to his ideals they thrived and prospered. Only when his influence over them weakened through the passing of time, did that decadence set in which led to the fall of his House. Under his immediate successors the Chinese empire enjoyed 150 years of expansion and prosperity, while during that time two great emperors brought glory and honour to the dynasty which he had founded before he left the world.

PART II

A YOUNG EMPEROR ASCENDS THE
THRONE

I

THE TRIUMPH OF FAITH

BEFORE the emperor Shun-chih retired from the world and entered a Buddhist monastery, he selected four regents to govern the state during the minority of his son. At the same time Father Schall was appointed imperial tutor to the young emperor K'ang Hsi, as Shun-chih knew he was qualified to act as guide and adviser to the throne. Despite the cloud which had come between Shun-chih and his old friend during the last few years, the emperor continued to believe in the integrity of the Jesuit and he knew that in him his son would have a sincere and faithful friend. It was even reported that Father Schall had influenced his decision to make his son his successor instead of appointing one of his own brothers emperor as he had first intended to do. In any case it was owing to the important position which Father Schall held at court at the beginning of the new reign that the Jesuits were able to influence the mind of the boy-emperor K'ang Hsi. And it was due to Father Schall that the spread of Western ideas and culture were not obstructed in China but continued to expand under a second Manchu monarch who was as liberal-minded as the founder of the dynasty had been.

As far as the Jesuits were concerned, the abdication of Shun-chih was a sudden and devastating blow. The position which Father Schall had built up at court had been unique.

"Never," wrote Father de Rougemont in his *Historia Tartaro-Sinica*, "since the foundation of the Chinese empire did an emperor have the confidence in a stranger that Shun-chih had in Father Schall."

It seemed at first to the Jesuits, stunned as they were by their unexpected misfortune, that all their work had to be done over again and never would success be so nearly within their grasp as it had been during the reign of Shun-chih. But with their usual ability to adapt themselves to changing conditions and make the most of every opportunity, the obstacle was surmounted and they eventually found in the son of their former patron the protector they required.

The task of introducing Christian ideals into China was

made easier because the young emperor K'ang Hsi was an extremely intelligent boy. Although only a child when he came to the throne, his young mind was soon profoundly impressed by the teachings of his tutor, the learned Father Schall. The emperor Shun-chih, as a devout Buddhist, had accepted Western ideas with reservations but had never allowed them to influence his judgment. His son was quite different. In no other monarch of the Eastern world were the influences of the East and West as subtly blended as in the character of K'ang Hsi. The instruction of Father Schall served to quicken his intelligence by widening his horizon. From the immense storehouse of Chinese culture he learned wisdom and the ability to look beyond the immediate present and think in terms of decades. These two widely divergent systems of thought became an integral part of his personality, but because he had natural common sense one never succeeded in supplanting the other. Serenely impartial, even as a boy, in his own way he was able to extract the best elements from both.

At an early age he learned to ask questions which only the Jesuits with their scientifically trained minds were able to answer. This made them indispensable to him and all through his long reign one or more of them was always by his side. The Jesuits showed their appreciation of the emperor's friendship by becoming his biographers and proclaiming the news of him and his empire throughout the Christian world. Their letters to their friends in Europe reflected the high opinion which they had formed not only of their pupil, the emperor, but also of the Chinese people, whom they came to know so well. In France, Spain, Germany, Portugal, and other countries of the West, the stories of the Jesuits were found to be more interesting than any previous legendary accounts of the strange and fabulous land of China.

The picture presented by the Jesuits was a kindly one in which shadows were softened and the light was allowed to shine on a well-ordered, ceremonious country ruled over by a high-minded man, who was not only a great monarch but also a great scholar. The interest of the West was aroused to such a degree by this picture that powerful European princes vied with each other in introducing Chinese novelties at their courts. In France, during the eighteenth century

when everything Chinese became the fashion, Louis XV, at the instigation of La Pompadour, followed the plough himself at the New Year in imitation of an old Chinese custom.

The Jesuits might be called the first real ambassadors sent to China from the West and their success in that country gave them a position never since equalled by any other foreigners. No ambassador of later days, not even when he arrived accompanied by a large suite of retainers and bringing rare and costly gifts, was ever honoured as the penniless Jesuits were honoured by the first two rulers of the Manchu dynasty. It was only Father Schall and a few of his successors who, of all the foreigners that came to China during the following centuries, were allowed to wear the button which indicated that its wearer held the rank of a high mandarin. The only Westerner ever mentioned in the dynastic annals of the empire was Father Ricci, the founder of the Jesuit order in China. Like threads of a sombre hue woven into the web of a colourful tapestry, the lives of the Catholic missionaries merged with those of the early Manchu monarchs. For a short time East and West were able to associate with equal advantage to both on the basis of a mutual love of learning ; the only firm basis which could ever unite two such opposing schools of thought.

The phenomenal success of the early Jesuits in the Far East was due above all else to the enlightened policy of the order, which allowed its representatives abroad almost complete liberty of action. Confidence was placed in the ability of the individual missionary to do what he thought was necessary and what was best for his cause in a foreign country. This confidence was not misplaced, as the early Jesuits were, without doubt, most extraordinary men. They combined immense learning and a considerable amount of worldly wisdom with a faith so great that no accomplishment seemed impossible. Their dream was to win the whole world for Christ and to unite mankind into one great brotherhood. It was, in its own way, as imperialistic an ideal as that which inspired the Manchus, but while the latter conquered China with the sword, the Jesuits arrived armed only with the word of God on their lips. The ultimate aim of both was the same, although the means employed were diametrically

opposed. In one respect only were their methods in accord. Neither depended on overwhelming numbers. The Manchus conquered China with no more than 150,000 fighting men, while the holy audacity of the Jesuits sent them to subdue an empire with less than thirty unarmed, unprotected priests.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the Jesuit fathers were to be seen in every country of the known world. A close, black cassock, a rosary swinging from the waist, and a wide black hat looped up at the sides proclaimed the wearer to be a Jesuit. Often they abandoned their dark habits to dress as the natives dressed of the country to which they had been sent. In countless disguises and by an infinite variety of methods, they cajoled and persuaded foreign peoples to accept their faith.

Such a comparatively small thing as a chance shot had been responsible for the founding of the Jesuit order. The shot, fired at random by a French artilleryman, had struck down Ignatius Loyola, a nobleman who was fighting for Spain. Loyola had been a courtier as well as a soldier before this time, but when he recovered from the long illness which followed his injury his character had fundamentally changed. During the months of suffering he had been transformed by a vision. Like Saul on the way to Damascus he "saw the light". The founding of the Society of Jesus was the direct result of his vision and in the search for followers he left his own country and became a wanderer on the face of the earth.

Loyola brought to his task qualities of mind which had made his forefathers leaders in Spain. The order which he founded reflected his own aristocratic and far-sighted point of view; the highest value was placed on individual intelligence and no question of detail was ever allowed to obscure the whole issue at stake. Vowed to poverty, the early Jesuits often lived under conditions which would have dismayed a beggar in the streets, yet they were never discouraged and always retained the large vision of their founder who, through his magnetic personality and indomitable will, had animated them with his own belief that the world could be conquered for the Faith.

The training to which the Jesuits were subjected was rigorous in the extreme and only suitable for the strong and

courageous. Prolonged meditation and endless prayers, directed by a remarkable book of spiritual exercises written by Loyola himself, was the first step towards entrance into the Society of Jesus. Then followed two years devoted to the meanest tasks and the most degrading occupations in order that the novice should learn the virtues of humility and obedience. Only when the Jesuit had conquered the opposing forces within himself and his soul was filled with repose, and when his own volition was subordinated to that of his superiors in the Order, was he ready to prepare for the special task to which his talents and temperament best fitted him.

Loyola had been a wanderer all his life and the Jesuits followed in his footsteps. Before taking up his work in a foreign country, the Jesuit was obliged to learn the language and know something of the history, literature, customs, and manners of the people. He must also understand their religion, no matter how strange and unorthodox it appeared from his point of view, and be prepared to discuss it with learned men who were bound to be strongly prejudiced against him and his teaching. Only a small band of Jesuits were ever permitted to penetrate into any one country, but time and time again a few intrepid men, inspired by a great ideal and directed with intelligent foresight, were able to exert a profound influence on the people among whom they worked.

In all the countries of the East where the Jesuits gained a foothold, their methods were much the same. Trained missionaries mingled with all classes of the population but, to a great extent, their efforts were directed towards reaching the nobles and the upper classes, as they believed that one important convert brought hundreds in his train. In India they found it expedient to dress and talk as Brahmins. In Japan, where humility was not appreciated, they travelled in state with the retinues of ambassadors. In China many of them lived at the court.

In the sixteenth century the mission fields of the East were roughly divided between Spain and Portugal and in this division China fell to the lot of Portugal. Not until a century later did other nations venture to dispute the claims of these two Powers to save souls in the Far East by using their own methods and going ahead in their own way.

At first the Jesuit order predominated in China. The Jesuits were successful because they did not attempt to interfere with customs and habits which they knew they were powerless to change; for example, they ignored ancestor worship and explained their action by saying that this usage had no religious significance and was only a part of the traditional respect shown by the Chinese to their parents, the logical development, as it were, of the Confucian cult of filial piety.

Other sects of the Roman Catholic church were not so tolerant. The missionaries who came to China in increasing numbers towards the end of the seventeenth century were unanimous in their dislike of the Jesuits, whose stately manners and the high positions which they held at the court were obvious signs of success. These later missionaries of other orders brought charges against the Jesuits to the authorities at Rome, with the result that quarrels within the church weakened its prestige in the Far East. The Jesuit dream of a Catholic world empire failed in the end, not because of the hostility of Orientals to an alien religion, but because of differences of opinion between the various missionary orders.

The first Jesuit missionary to reach the court of a Chinese emperor was Father Matteo Ricci, a distinguished and far-seeing man, whose pioneering in a land filled with so much that was new and strange resulted in his becoming a personage of international importance. At the time when the Ming emperors still ruled over China he succeeded in surmounting the formidable obstacles which blocked the entrance of foreigners into the country. Father Ricci with two brothers of his Order settled unobtrusively in Canton. To avoid comment, they dressed like Chinese Buddhist priests, the bonzes, and adopted a life of poverty, begging their bread and living in the poorest quarter of the city. Soon Father Ricci realized that he had made a grave mistake, for after trying this manner of life for a while, he learned that the bonzes were not respected by the people. After watching them closely he decided that they merited no better treatment, as they were ill-educated and ill-bred and made their livelihood through trading on the superstitions of the poor.

When Father Ricci reached this conclusion the three

foreign bonzes disappeared from the haunts where they were known and were never seen again in Canton. None of the humble people with whom they had mingled ever associated them with a certain Dr. Li, who shortly after took a small house in a different part of the city. This Dr. Li was a man who obviously belonged to the educated classes and it was not long before his presence became known to the scholars of the city. Dr. Li, the name assumed by Father Ricci, had a house which proved so fascinating to his visitors that they came in ever increasing numbers to see the strange objects which it contained. The chief attraction was a large map of the world which showed the Chinese empire, not represented as it always had been as the greatest nation on earth surrounded by barbarian hordes, but as one among many other nations of equal importance. This was a great surprise, even to the better educated of his visitors, but when Dr. Li showed them pictures of unknown cities, which he said were the capitals of these countries, their doubts of his veracity were eventually dispelled. To please his new acquaintances Dr. Li made copies of his wonderful map and gave them away as presents. It was not surprising that before many months had passed the fame of the strange doctor had spread and all Canton wished to know him.

But Canton was not the capital of the Chinese empire and although Father Ricci was able to talk with his new friends about the mysteries of the Christian God, he was not satisfied. Despite the ever-widening circle of his influence, he felt that the ear of the emperor must be gained before the religion he had come to teach could make lasting and permanent headway. With this end in view he closed his house and undertook the long journey to Peking.

After a journey of several months he eventually arrived at the capital and made his way to the imperial palace, which he found to be, like all other important family dwellings in China, surrounded by high walls. But because it was the residence of the emperor, the walls were higher and the space enclosed vaster than anything which he had ever imagined to be possible. How to get inside this enclosure was the question which occupied his thoughts. Father Ricci had no friends in the city. He had come alone and unheralded, encouraged only by his devotion and his great faith. He was, however, not to be dissuaded from his

purpose. During the years that he had spent in China he had learned how to wait. And so one morning, not long after his arrival at Peking, a modestly dressed man with a long beard might have been seen standing outside the gate leading to the Forbidden City. There was nothing about his person to attract attention except that in his hand he held a wonderful European clock. Showing proper deference for the servant of so august an emperor, Father Ricci addressed an official at the entrance of the palace and expressed his desire to present the clock to the Son of Heaven.

Had the clock been less wonderful, it is probable that Father Ricci would never have been heard of by the court, but as no one had ever seen anything like it before it eventually passed from hand to hand until it reached the apartments of the emperor. Once there it continued to tick quietly for the remainder of the day. No one deigned to notice it until the next morning, when it was found that the strange sound had ceased. The emperor's attendants endeavoured to start the clock going again but without success, so eventually an inquiry was made and Father Ricci was discovered, patiently waiting in the same spot where he had been seen the previous day.

It must have seemed a long journey to Father Ricci from the great gate of the palace to the emperor's apartment. He trudged through courtyard after courtyard, each one larger and more imposing than the last, noting with surprise the strange sights he saw, until at length he reached the magnificent apartment which contained his clock. A few quick turns, and the clock started ticking again as if nothing had happened. Father Ricci, his services no longer required, bowed himself out and vanished from view. But when, on the following day, the same process was repeated, the emperor himself engaged the mysterious stranger in conversation and before he had dismissed his interesting visitor he had learned how to wind up the clock himself.

During his short conversation with the emperor Father Ricci had contrived to tell him about some other new and wonderful invention of which he alone knew the secret. From that time onward he was summoned every morning to present and explain some device of Western origin. Father Ricci's system was the same as that employed by the

story-tellers of the Arabian Nights, insomuch as he always stopped his explanations before the curiosity of his audience was entirely satisfied. This method proved so successful that it was followed by his successors in the Jesuit order. They artfully led their imperial pupils to ask questions which led to discussions, and sooner or later the discussions turned to the question of religion. No emperor was ever converted by the Jesuits but an empress of the southern Ming dynasty became a Christian after the Manchu invasion. She and the chief eunuch of her court wrote letters to Rome and were accepted as notable converts by the pope, who was pleased to give the lady the Christian name of Helen.

Father Matteo Ricci was succeeded by Father Adam Schall in the capacity of adviser and tutor to the throne. Such an event as a mere change of dynasty made no difference to the plans of the Jesuits. The fall of Peking and the coming of the Manchus, although events of major importance to the country, were allowed to interfere only temporarily with the work of the Faith. After the death of Father Schall during the minority of the young emperor K'ang Hsi, Father Verbiest became royal astronomer as well as tutor to the emperor. With their accustomed foresight the Jesuits had prepared in advance for the ultimate eventuality of death. As a good general always keeps fresh troops in reserve, so the Jesuits always had a successor trained and waiting to take over a post when he was required to do so, in order that the work, planned with such elaborate care and definite precision of detail, should never be interrupted.

Ricci, Schall, and Verbiest were all three highly skilled in the arts and sciences of the West. They found by experience that their knowledge of these subjects was of inestimable advantage to them at the Chinese court. Simple experiments, such as the exact prediction of an eclipse or the artificial freezing of a bowl of water gave them a prestige which they would never have enjoyed as the exponents of an unknown, alien religion. All three men were great scholars and great teachers. They wrote many notable books in the Chinese language with the help of native assistants, and at the same time they and their fellow workers translated many of the Chinese classics into the languages of Europe. In this way some of the culture and

learning of the West was made available to the peoples of the East, while Chinese philosophical works reached the hands of European students. When they wrote to Rome for new and younger recruits the Fathers did not ask for men burning with religious fervour. What they required were men skilled in astrology, mathematics, or even in music and painting. The Jesuits residing at the court fully appreciated the fact that they enjoyed the emperor's protection and the friendship of his courtiers by reason of their knowledge of the many subjects imperfectly understood by the Chinese. By means of the influence gained in this manner they were able to protect other members of their Order, who spread the gospel to the people at large. It was understood that the task of the Jesuits at the capital was to make the provinces safe for the workers in other parts of the empire.

None of these early missionaries ever grew rich in the service of the Chinese emperors. They received food and lodgings and were often honoured by having food sent to them direct from the emperor's own table, but that was all. It was the custom of the country for presents to be given to the ruler, not for him to give them to others, who were supposed to find their reward in being allowed to enter his service. After eleven arduous years as court painter, a missionary of the order of the Propaganda Fidei, who came to China at the close of the seventeenth century, recorded that he had received four Chinese robes lined with ermine from the emperor. This was the first and last payment ever made to him for his long years of service.

Much was required of the missionaries in attendance on the sovereign. As dawn was the traditional hour to call at the palace and inquire after his health, they rose in the middle of the night and hurried through the streets to be there in time. If the emperor were ill, they attended to his needs and treated him at the risk of their lives, knowing that should he die, they would be held responsible. When he went on expeditions they followed him on horseback, to be at hand should their special knowledge be required. Day by day, until they died of old age and overwork, they did his bidding. Whether they were ordered to make a map of the empire and measure it mile by mile, cast cannon for the army, or arrange treaties between the Manchus and the

Western Powers, they never once wavered. For the glory of God the Jesuits went on.

Their influence reached its height during the long and glorious reign of the emperor K'ang Hsi. Father Ricci had paved the way. His successors were able to reap where he had sown. During this period they almost succeeded in uniting East and West under the banner of Christ. Had their dreams become a reality, who can say what changes might not have taken place during the past two hundred years. One fact is certain : European civilization would have been firmly established in China.

II

THE RULE OF THE REGENTS

The history of the first seven years of the life of K'ang Hsi is obscure. It is said that as his mother died at his birth he was not brought up in the palace, but instead was given into the care of people of moderate circumstances who lived in an unpretentious part of the city. So humble had been his surroundings that when the eunuchs were sent to bring him to the palace after the death of his father, they found him playing in the streets with other boys of his own age. After he had heard the news of his accession to the throne he begged to be allowed to take his companions with him to share in his good fortune. If the story is true, these early years doubtless did much to prevent the future emperor from coming under evil influences during the most formative period of his life. He learned none of the vices that so many of the boys of the imperial family were taught by the palace eunuchs, and he retained a democratic turn of mind and a taste for frugal living to the end of his days. Even the sudden change from obscurity to unexpected prominence did not seem to do him any harm.

He was an attractive child. Bright eyes gave to his face an expression of great vivacity and his broad forehead indicated an intellectual turn of mind. An attack of small-pox had left deep marks upon his face without, however, detracting from its charm, because it was his eager mind and friendly spirit towards those with whom he came in contact that gave character to his features and won him devoted friends. Although he was only the son of a concubine and had two brothers older than himself, he had been chosen to succeed his father, the emperor Shun-chih, because of his unusual intelligence. Previous to this time no one had thought of him as the future emperor. The infant son of the favourite Tung Kuei-fei had been regarded as the heir to the throne, and it was the death of this child that had brought K'ang Hsi into a position of importance.

A contemporary novel, the *Hung Lou Meng*, describes the ideal of youthful manly beauty prevalent in seventeenth century China. Pao Yu, the hero of the novel, like the

young Manchu emperor, was considered to be a handsome boy. It was said of him that :—

“His face was like the Harvest Moon, his complexion like the flowers of a spring dawn. His hair was as neat as if it had been cut out with a keen knife and his brows as if they had been blackened with ink. His eyes were like glamorous ripples in an autumnal pond.”

His character was described as being “affable even in anger and tender even when he frowned.” (1)

The boy Pao Yu portrayed in the novel wore a beautiful coat embroidered with butterflies and flowers. On his head was a cap studded with precious gems. The boy-emperor doubtless dressed in much the same way on state occasions, except that his coat was decorated with entwined dragons and its colour was the imperial yellow of the Chinese emperors. In private his tastes were simple. No ruler disliked display more than did K'ang Hsi. He always wore dark clothing and his only jewel was a great pearl attached to his cap, the insignia of his rank.

But there was no simplicity in the ceremony which marked the elevation of the young emperor to the throne, when he was presented for the first time to the princes and mandarins who would henceforth be the members of his court. In the great hall, where he sat on the throne which his father had so recently vacated, his feet crossed under him in true Manchu fashion, the courtiers were ranged in two rows and dressed in gorgeous silk robes woven with a design of roses in gold thread. On either side of the throne stood twenty-five officials, each one bearing a great umbrella of gold brocade, while others carried huge silk fans or great standards embroidered with stars, dragons, or the figure of the moon portrayed in all its changing aspects. The remaining mandarins carried maces, axes, hammers, or other instruments of war or ceremony decorated with the heads of strange monsters and legendary animals.

It was all quite incomprehensible to the child who sat on the great throne and watched his subjects bow their heads nine times to the ground before him and remain on their knees in his presence. It must have seemed equally incomprehensible to the older Manchu nobles with their manners of the camp, as well as to the Mongol khans, not so far removed after all from the followers of Genghis Khan

and more at home in the saddle than on their knees before a throne. This court of the young Manchu emperor was one of contrasting personalities ; but personalities which in time would all be welded into the mould formed during the centuries by the Chinese people, whose ancient, ceremonious civilization no conqueror had ever been able to withstand.

In this new world, so strange and so bewildering, the boy-emperor had neither father nor mother to guide him and help him form opinions of what he saw and heard. There was only his grandmother Bochita, the mother of Shun-chih, who supervised his education as best she could and on whom the boy lavished all his affection. The wise old woman arranged matters so that little of his time should be spent in court ceremonial. He was given companions of his own age and of suitable rank with whom he organized a mimic court and played at mimic warfare in the gardens of the palace. Like all Manchus he was a fearless rider, and hunting was his favourite diversion. Even when very young he became an expert bowman and could shoot equally well with either his right or his left hand while aiming at a target from the back of a galloping horse. It was said of him that :—

“ In bodily exercises he soon improved to that degree that there was scarce any person of note that could cope with him.”(2)

To please his Chinese subjects, who respected learning, great care was taken with the education of the boy. In addition to his ordinary studies, he was obliged to master two languages and acquire the ability to write elegant epistles in both. Manchu was the court language, but Chinese was equally important because all official documents were written in duplicate, one copy in Manchu and the other in Chinese. It was necessary for an emperor to know both, otherwise his commands might be misinterpreted in one language or the other. There were many fine scholars qualified to instruct him in the mysteries of learning as it was known to the Chinese, but when it came to the question of Western science which he, in imitation of his father, was eager to learn, there was only the old German Jesuit, Father Adam Schall, who could be his teacher. The young emperor was an ideal pupil, for he had a memory that was remarkable even during his early childhood ; he was able to remember any fact which he considered to be

important or which was once firmly impressed upon his mind. He never forgot an explanation, just as he always remembered the name or face of a friend.

The regents, who had been appointed to govern during his minority, were not brilliant men but they had behind them long records of loyal service in the Manchu cause. One of their first acts was to expel from the palace the multitude of bonzes and lama priests who had flourished there during the last years of the reign of Shun-chih. These priests were considered responsible for many of the troubles and difficulties of the past. Father Adam Schall, on the contrary, was confirmed in his high office of royal astronomer and president of the tribunal of mathematics and, in accordance with the wish of the former emperor, he was subsequently appointed tutor to K'ang Hsi. At the beginning of the regency the Jesuit used his influence in more ways than one. It was due to him that many girls, who were being brought up in the palace to fill the positions of imperial concubines, were released and sent back to their homes. In his capacity of tutor Father Schall taught the young emperor the elementary principles of Western science and shared with him his own enthusiasm for the stars. The kind old man loved all young people and for a few years the boy received the benefit of his ripe wisdom and affectionate regard.

The most important influence in the life of the young emperor during his minority was that of his grandmother, Bochita. She was born a Mongol princess and in her youth had been carefully trained to perform all the duties required of the women of her race. She had learned to take care of the yurt of her father ; she had milked his herds and driven his oxen when the tribe moved to new pastures. Her tasks included preparing the felt of which the yurt was made. Felt was not a woven material, but consisted of finely cut hair glued together and then pressed ; it was used extensively by the Mongols for saddles, garments, rugs, and other necessities of the nomad life, all of which were cut and stitched by the women. Born to toil, as were all Mongol women, many of them were in constant danger. Especially a handsome girl like Bochita, who might at any time be kidnapped by a hostile tribe, or be given to a stranger as part of the spoils of war. But those Mongol women who

survived became of necessity strong and courageous. They made loyal mates to their warrior husbands and when disaster occurred they were always prepared to take their places as the fearless defenders of family and possessions.

Even after she had married the Manchu chieftain, T'ai Tsung, life had not been made easier for Bochita. The Manchus lived the same migratory existence as did her own people, the Mongols. It was only when T'ai Tsung had definitely established himself in power that he had been able to found cities and teach his people how to cultivate the soil. A life which consisted of constant moving from place to place and included unpredictable eventualities had taught Bochita foresight and wisdom. When her husband and son were lost to her she knew at once that she must take their place and bring up her grandson according to the unwritten traditions of his race.

It had been a great change for her when she, an untutored woman, born and reared in a Mongol tent, had been obliged to take her place as the empress dowager of the Chinese people during the reign of her son. That she occupied this position with dignity is proved by the fact that she continued to hold it until the day of her death. The emperor K'ang Hsi, her grandson, felt for her the deepest affection and treated her with the greatest respect. Her influence at court was considerable but it was always used with discretion ; unlike many other empress-dowagers she was content to remain behind the scenes, assisting her grandson with her advice without any undue display of power.

It fell to the lot of Bochita to keep alive in the boy-emperor the memory of his father, Shun-chih, and the ideals which had dominated the latter's life. Because her son, the former emperor, had loved Father Schall, the person of the old German Jesuit was sacred to her and she was in the habit of showing him many kindnesses. This was not due to the fact that she admired Western learning. On the contrary, she was influenced to a very great extent by the lama priests, who had taught her that all foreigners were hostile to the Buddhists and to the great Dalai Lama in Tibet. Despite this powerful adverse influence, she was loyal to her son, and Father Schall, like all others who had served her family faithfully, came under her protection. As long as the regents allowed him his liberty, Father Schall

continued to visit the emperor, whose mind was influenced by the two who loved him best, Bochita, the wise but illiterate Mongol princess, and Father Schall, priest and scholar from the West.

Father Schall had received a great and unique honour from the emperor Shun-chih when he had been appointed to the post of royal astronomer and created a mandarin of the first class. This distinction gave him the right to take part in discussions and express his opinion on questions relating to the state. But because his position had been unassailable during the former reign, he had incurred the jealousy of influential members of the government. "Ma fa," as Shun-chih had affectionately called him, was now an old man, slow to retaliate and firm in the ways of peace. Intrigue at court made his position insecure and the emperor was only a boy who was quite unable to protect his father's friend.

It was during the minority of K'ang Hsi that grave accusations were brought against the Christian church and its leaders in China. A certain Mohammedan mathematician, Yam Kam Sien, who desired the coveted position of royal astronomer, wrote a book in which he attacked the Christians and all their actions: "Their books are badly explained," he wrote, "their style is defective and they understand nothing." (3)

Among other things Yam Kam Sien accused them of preparing the way for an invasion of China by the Portuguese, a people who were regarded with suspicion at this time. Through his personal friendship with the most powerful of the regents, as well as by means of a lavish use of bribes, Yam Kam Sien succeeded in having Father Schall deprived of his official position. At the same time an order went forth that the Roman Catholic missionaries in the provinces were to be brought to Peking under guard.

This was not all. Late one night the soldiers arrived at the Jesuit college to arrest the four priests who lived in Peking. Father Schall was ill. He had been recently stricken with apoplexy, which had deprived him of the use of his speech. With him at the time were two other old men, the Fathers Buglio and Magalhaens. Formerly they had been the prisoners of Li Tzu-ch'eng, the cruel rebel leader who had sacked Peking. The two priests had never

completely recovered from their experiences in the rebel leader's camp. Day after day during the period of their captivity they had been obliged to witness acts of barbarism such as were inconceivable to the Western mind. Their health had suffered from prolonged hardship, as in the train of the rebel leader they had been forced to follow his fantastic court. Once, when caught between hostile armies, they had escaped and lived on roots and berries in the hills. Martyrs of the rebellion like so many others, their lives had been an epic of misery and adventure before the fall of the Ming. Now, like Father Schall, they were old men, tired and broken with memories too cruel to bear.

The fourth member of the company was a young man, thirty-seven years old, who had recently come to China to assist Father Schall. His name was Ferdinand Verbiest. He was a Belgian by birth, clever, cool-headed, and with an evenness of disposition which concealed a passionate nature and a determination to fight for the right. Yam Kam Sien and his friends had believed the three old men to be their victims. They had overlooked the younger man, whose unusual ability was as yet untried. When Verbiest undertook the defence of himself and his companions it was his first opportunity since his arrival in China to prove what he could do.

Prison life in seventeenth-century China was a grim experience, even for those who were used to continual hardship. The four Jesuits were thrust into a cell and heavy chains were attached to their ankles, wrists, and about their necks of such a weight that it was impossible for them to stand upright. Ten guards were appointed to watch each one as if they had been dangerous criminals. All were fed at the expense of Father Schall who, as a mandarin, was expected to provide food, not only for himself and his companions, but for his jailers as well. There was nothing unusual about this treatment as all political prisoners were dealt with in much the same way. Indeed, the Jesuits were more fortunate than many others because Father Schall, being still the recipient of a pension from the government, was able to provide food and a few comforts for them all.

Every day they were taken before the board of punishments to be questioned. As Father Schall was unable to

speaking, the replies were all made by Father Verbiest. Fortunately the younger man was accustomed to think quickly. Before his arrival at Peking he had several times extricated himself from dangerous situations because of his ability to keep calm and act accordingly when his companions were reduced to a state of panic. On the way to China he had been shipwrecked and taken prisoner by enemies of his country. Only by perseverance and cleverness had he succeeded in reaching there at all. His adventures on the way would have discouraged another man and yet to Verbiest they were incidents of little or no importance. So intent was he on his mission that the vicissitudes of life left him strangely unmoved.

He spent the hours of his imprisonment lying on the floor of his cell, immersed in Chinese books on mathematics so that he could better refute the accusations of his enemies. During the long nights, when physical discomfort made sleep impossible, he armed himself with irrefutable arguments and quotations taken from Chinese sources, which aided him to prove his point. Sometimes, for five hours at a time, he would be called upon to reply to questions. Father Schall, ill and still loaded with chains, would fall to the ground with weariness and lay motionless during the remainder of the proceedings. But the younger man never once wavered. His replies were occasionally such that they disconcerted his adversaries and they were obliged to change their methods of attack.

The Jesuits were charged on three counts : that they had conspired against the state ; that the law they taught was a pernicious doctrine ; that European astronomy was incorrect. The first two were difficult to prove, but the third supplied an endless subject of argument and enabled everyone interested to express an opinion. The trial centred more and more on the question of mathematics and astronomy, strange subjects to be distorted into evidence against harmless men on trial for their lives.

After the first few weeks of fruitless discussion, during which the arguments used by the examiners were so skillfully turned against them by Father Verbiest that their lack of logic was exposed, a new and graver charge was brought against Father Schall. He was accused of having chosen an inauspicious day for the burial of the infant son of the

emperor Shun-chih and his favourite wife, the beautiful Tung Kuei-fei. In his capacity of royal astronomer he had made a grave mistake, so they said, which had angered the spirits of the earth, air, and water. As a result the deaths of the emperor and his concubine had followed shortly after that of the child. This was a capital offence in the eyes of both Chinese and Manchus. For this crime at the end of three months of questioning, Father Schall was condemned to be cut into a thousand pieces, the most horrible of all forms of punishment which could be inflicted on a criminal.

It was eagerly desired by his accusers that his three companions should share his sufferings, but as the other Jesuits had been absent from Peking at the time of the death of the infant prince, it was impossible to prove their complicity. They were banished to Tartary for life on the grounds that they had been implicated in the other charges. All the remaining Catholic missionaries, who had been brought to Peking from the provinces, were sent to Canton, where they remained until the order was rescinded by K'ang Hsi after he attained his majority.

The Jesuit fathers of the seventeenth century possessed a firm belief in the reality of miracles. Time after time they had called upon God to save them during storms at sea and had cast sacred objects into the angry water to prove their sincerity. When the waves had diminished in fury, faith was strengthened and it remained sufficiently powerful for the four men in prison to believe that a miracle would save them now. As Father Schall and his companions prayed for divine intervention, it seemed as if a miracle did indeed take place when, in the course of a few days, earthquake shocks destroyed a large portion of the city.

The first earthquake took place at the time when a great assembly of princes and mandarins had been convened to confirm the death sentence passed on Father Schall. The regents dared not proceed with the execution without the consent of Bochita, the powerful empress dowager, therefore both she and the young emperor had been requested to attend the assembly. Bochita had the death warrant in her hand when the walls of the palace shook and the earth rumbled beneath her feet. All the company ran into the courtyard of the palace and waited in terror for what might

come. When fifteen minutes later a second shock occurred, Bochita cried in a loud voice :

“A pardon for all prisoners.” (4)

In the city the people were panicstricken. They fled from their homes to live in tents in the fields. It was said openly on every side that the God of the Christians had spoken. He was showing his displeasure at the treatment of Father Schall.

The pardon which Bochita had announced applied only to those prisoners not convicted of serious crimes. Although Father Verbiest and the two other Jesuits were given their freedom, there was no change in the position of Father Schall. Verbiest, therefore, refused to accept his liberty and stayed in prison with the old man.

But there was no peace for the regents while Father Schall remained under sentence of death. During the month that followed the earthquake, terrifying and ill-omened phenomena occurred. At one time a comet appeared in the sky, an event which was always explained as predicting a change of dynasty. Then a great white bird as large as a sheep was seen on the roof of the imperial palace. Last, but by no means least, the apartments of the empress-dowager burned to the ground. This final disaster procured the release of Father Schall. He was allowed to return to his home where he remained in a state of semi-imprisonment until he died the following year.

The passing of the old Jesuit was marked by no official act of recognition. At the time of his trial his position of royal astronomer had been given to his accuser, the Mohammedan mathematician, Yam Kam Sien. Long before Father Schall died he had ceased to be of any importance to the state.

Through his death the Jesuits lost a great leader. But Father Verbiest, who had been trained under him, was waiting in obscurity for the moment to arrive when he would be called to take his place. The break in the chain was only for a moment and the loss of Father Schall did not dim the vision of his brother Jesuits nor shatter their belief in the ultimate success of their mission in China.

III

THE AFFAIRS OF THE SUN AND MOON

That a major political crisis should have been precipitated in a state the size of the Chinese empire because of the arrest of four foreigners, seems difficult to believe, but in the case of the Jesuits the sun, moon, and stars were involved, which made it quite a different matter. Astronomy had always been a subject of passionate interest to the Chinese people as well as a matter of supreme importance to their rulers. The correct compilation of the calendar was one of the means by which the state was kept in order ; therefore, the trial of the Jesuits had been notable not because of the accusations brought against the four Fathers, but because it was an attempt to overthrow the European system of astronomical calculation.

Nothing had really been proved during the many weeks of the trial except the determination of the old order to suppress the new ideas imported from the West. The people were more than ever confused, because the foreigners, although they had received sentences of either death or banishment, had invariably proved to be right when it came to the matter of astronomical predictions, and Yam Kam Sien, the Mohammedan protégé of the regents, had shown his incompetence over and over again.

The root of the difficulty lay in the length of the Chinese month. The year was divided into long months of thirty days and short months of twenty-nine days. Thus every year had several uncounted days left over, and when these were added together every five years they made an extra month which must be added to the calendar. It was these uncounted days which were the reason why the Chinese methods of reckoning were incorrect. Sometimes an eclipse of the sun was predicted too soon or too late and sometimes one arrived unexpectedly without any warning at all.

Every year a book called the " Indications of the Seasons " was prepared by the tribunal of mathematics. It contained not only an account of the usual cosmic events to be expected during the coming year, but it served also as a form of

national horoscope. It predicted auspicious days for certain activities, such as those favourable for the cultivation of the soil, for changes of residence and so on, as well as inauspicious days when the stars were against the success of new undertakings. The correct compilation of the calendar was, therefore, of primary importance to the emperor, as the "Indication of the Seasons" was used to instruct the people when to sow, when to reap, when to pay their taxes, and when they could have a holiday and amuse themselves. Should the calendar be incorrect and events predicted not take place at the stated moment then the people lost faith in its infallibility. They said that the system which directed the universe, the *Tao*, was wrongly understood by the emperor and his ministers and only dire misfortune could possibly result.

During the declining days of the Ming dynasty, when revolts were the order of the day and the threat of a Manchu invasion was always looming in the background, the emperor decided that something must be wrong with the calendar because the people would no longer obey him. As all others had failed to discover the error, he had turned to the Jesuits in desperation. The astute Fathers were prepared for this request: they made some rapid calculations and explained the errors which had resulted from the system of the long and short months. To prove their point they predicted an eclipse of the sun to the day and hour, which mortified the Chinese astrologers who had failed to warn the people of the imminence of such an important and inauspicious event. The universal fear of an eclipse was expressed by an old fable which described how the sun and moon were eaten by a dragon. Even in the written language there was no character to signify an eclipse. It was always depicted by pictographs of the sun and moon coupled with one representing the verb "to eat."

His correct prediction of the eclipse had been the beginning of the career of Father Adam Schall, who was immediately appointed royal astronomer and commanded to set the affairs of the sun and moon in order. During two reigns and a part of a third, in fact until the day of his arrest by the regents, Father Schall continued to watch the heavens for the glory of the Christian God and during his term of office no unforeseen event took place among the

celestial bodies to disturb the peace. With the fall of Father Schall all was changed. Yam Kam Sien, who had been appointed royal astronomer, was only biding his time before the old system of the long and short month should be restored and the calendar reorganized once more according to ancient and traditional methods.

The young emperor, K'ang Hsi, was not at all pleased with the change nor was he satisfied with the manner in which the regents had handled the matter. He considered them reactionary old men, who had failed to support the policies instituted by his father, the emperor Shun-chih ; likewise he did not consider that their innovations had been of benefit to the people. As he grew older he came to dislike them more and more and he made up his mind to dismiss them as soon as the occasion presented itself. There was no prescribed age for an emperor to assert his authority, which depended on circumstances and on the ability of the individual prince. When the time arrived it was customary for the young ruler to send a request to the tribunal of mathematics commanding his royal astronomer to name an auspicious day which would mark the end of his minority and the beginning of his real power.

To bind him closer to the regents, the emperor had been given the granddaughter of one of them in marriage. This lady was K'ang Hsi's first empress and became the mother of the heir to the throne. But despite the respect which the emperor felt for his young wife, K'ang Hsi at the age of fourteen was searching in his mind for a method of ridding himself of all four regents without offending their powerful supporters and endangering the authority of the throne. In the year 1666, shortly after the trial of Father Schall, one of the regents died and the emperor decided that his opportunity had arrived.

Bochita, the empress dowager, shared her grandson's dislike for the regents. The subject of their dismissal had been discussed many times in the privacy of her apartments, but the wise old queen had always advised the emperor to wait. One day, when K'ang Hsi went to pay her a visit, he found her playing at dice with a favourite eunuch. When her grandson entered her apartment, she invited him to join in the game. The first time he threw the dice six different numbers appeared.

"A good omen," cried the superstitious empress dowager, "you no longer need fear the power of the regents."

As he had only been waiting for the approval and support of his grandmother, the emperor now felt free to act, and shortly after he made a request to the bureau of mathematics stating that he wished a day named for the assumption of his formal duties.

Duke Ao Pai, the most masterful and the most disliked of the regents, realized that his hours were numbered when the emperor had shown his willingness to dispense with his services. He immediately addressed a memorial to the throne, begging leave to retire from court and take up his residence near the tomb of the former emperor Shun-chih. This was such an unusual request that when K'ang Hsi received it he called a council of state. At this meeting he accused his former minister of evil intentions against the throne. The request of the powerful duke was presented to the assembly as evidence of some ulterior and sinister motive. The emperor ordered his arrest on the charge of conspiring to deceive the throne.

After a short trial the duke was sentenced to death with all his family according to the custom of the times. The two remaining regents were not implicated in his disgrace, nor were they punished in any way. The emperor was never vindictive. When he struck he chose his victim and punished him alone. This time with one rapid blow he broke the power of the regents and from that day until his death he ruled as the sole and absolute master of the state.

Despite his youth the young emperor assumed his duties in a serious frame of mind. His time was fully occupied. His day began at dawn, when he gave his first audience to petitioners and it ended at nightfall when, as there was no adequate lighting in the palace, it was the custom to go to bed. The intervening hours were filled with burdensome duties and a certain amount of study, followed by some form of physical exercise, such as hunting or fishing, which he enjoyed above all other forms of sport. He showed by his actions and by the serious attention which he gave to important questions that his only wish was to please his subjects. He never decided anything in a hurry, but always consulted with his ministers or with the heads of the different tribunals. There were many changes which he was eager to

make, but he knew how to wait for his opportunities and preferred never to act against established precedents if it was possible to avoid doing so.

K'ang Hsi had not been on the throne a year before he was faced with a problem that had to do with the compilation of the calendar. Yam Kam Sien, the president of the tribunal of mathematics like his royal master, also wished to make changes and innovations, but he was hampered in his movements by the fact that his department came under the direct control of the emperor. As existing regulations could only be altered by royal decree, he had been obliged to continue with the European system of calculation instituted by Father Schall, who had removed the old Chinese astronomical instruments and replaced them with those of foreign construction. All this the Mohammedan wished to change. As a petition to the emperor was necessary before he could do so, he approached the heads of nine other departments of state, asking these officials to join with him in sending a request to the emperor. In this petition Yam Kam Sien asked permission to restore the old instruments to their former positions and resume the antiquated methods of calculation abandoned by Father Schall.

When the emperor received the document he realized that at the beginning of his reign he was called upon to make a decision of the utmost importance to the state. What was more, if he refused the request he would be acting contrary to the advice of his ministers, whose conservative methods were popular with the people. In this emergency he had no one to aid him and he was forced to rely on his own innate good sense. A council of empire had served his purpose once before. Now he decided to follow the same method of procedure. The heads of all the departments of the government, the principal mandarins and the princes of the blood were, for the second time in the space of a year, summoned to court. Yam Kam Sien would of course be present, and the emperor was determined that the exponents of the rival system should also be represented.

Since the death of Father Schall the three Jesuits living in Peking had been confined to their house.

"It has been a prison," wrote Father Verbiest to a friend in Europe, "but a prison which provides facilities for admiring the sky and contemplating the earth."

They had not been banished to Canton with the other priests of their Order, but instead had been compelled to lead a life of seclusion and inactivity. They had almost given up hope of ever being recalled to court when, on the 25th of December, 1668, four mandarins knocked at their door.

"Open," cried a voice. "We bear an order from the emperor."

"Blessed be God," ejaculated Father Magalhaens as he hastened to obey. "The emperor has remembered our existence."

The message was a private one, so the Jesuits led their visitors to the room of the late father superior. When the door was carefully locked they fell on their knees as was the custom when receiving word from the emperor.

"Do you understand mathematics?" asked the spokesman of the mandarins.

"We are two old men who are ignorant of them," Father Magalhaens replied humbly, "but Father Verbiest is a distinguished mathematician, well versed in theory and practice."

After this the Fathers were allowed to stand and the conversation turned to the mistakes made by Yam Kam Sien in the compilation of the latest calendar. Father Verbiest was requested to point out one or more of the errors. This he did so clearly and explicitly that when the mandarins departed to make their report to the emperor they were well pleased with the result of their visit. The same evening after dark they returned with definite orders. The monarch desired the Fathers to appear at the palace the following morning at the time when the council of empire had been called to assemble.

The council was opened by one of the mandarins who had visited the Jesuits on the previous day. All those present fell on their knees while he read aloud the royal proclamation:

"I, the emperor, order you to put an end to your quarrels and controversies and instead join together with good grace in order to form a system of mathematics which be correct and free from errors."⁽¹⁾

K'ang Hsi knew as well as anyone that nothing would result from his order except a great deal of discussion, so he sent a messenger to summon Father Verbiest to him.

"Is there any method by which you can teach us which is the true and which the false method of calculation?" he asked.

"Nothing is simpler," replied Father Verbiest. "Let the mandarins in your majesty's service give to Yam Kam Sien a stick of wood of the form and height that he prefers. Let them give a second one to his assistant and a third one to me. On the day that you designate, the three sticks will be fixed in a perpendicular position in the ground and we will all endeavour to determine the exact position of the shadow at the noon hour. The one who makes no mistake in his calculations can be said to understand the true system of mathematics."

This idea pleased the emperor and the day of the contest was decided upon. But before the council was dissolved the Mohammedan, who saw his chances of holding his position receding, broke into a long tirade against the Europeans, despite the fact that to do so in the presence of the emperor was a serious breach of etiquette. K'ang Hsi was furious. He felt that he had been imposed upon because of his youth. Although he said nothing his heightened colour showed how greatly he resented the interruption.

"It was wonderful," Father Magalhaens reported afterwards, "to see the self-control of this young man only fifteen years of age."

The next day the same company reassembled at the palace and the test was made. The Mohammedan was unable to make the correct calculation and even though the test was repeated three times he never once succeeded in predicting the exact position of the shadow. Each time the methods used by Father Verbiest proved to be superior, so that the observers could no longer doubt the supremacy of Western mathematics. After this triumph for the Jesuits the Mohammedan was arrested as an imposter. It was Father Verbiest who was made director of the observatory in his place and appointed vice-president of the tribunal of mathematics.

IV

INFLUENCE RESTORED

The history of the Society of Jesus in China was one of sudden rises and equally sudden falls. Time and again the Jesuits at Peking were destined to see the accomplishments of years swept away by a sudden turn of events. This was because their liberty of action and even their lives depended upon the inclination of an individual ruler. If he died, or if he withheld his patronage, the Order had no standing at all. The Jesuits were, however, patient men. When misfortune came to them they waited quietly for a fresh opportunity, knowing that when it arrived they were prepared to profit by it. Then they would force their way upward once more until they had regained all, perhaps more, than they had formerly lost. The death of Father Schall marked a law ebb in the fortunes of the Order and it was due to his successor, Father Verbiest, that the tide of calamity was reversed. Owing to his efforts the Society of Jesus was re-established on a firmer foundation in China than it had ever been before.

It was essential that one of the Fathers should have the ear of the emperor. One word from K'ang Hsi was sufficient to have every foreigner in China either massacred or banished. To prevent that word from being spoken Father Verbiest devoted his talents and his life. During the years which he passed at the side of the emperor the relations between China and the Western Powers were friendly, at times almost cordial. Father Verbiest not only worked to spread the religion he taught, but he succeeded in creating a feeling of respect for those who were its priests and followers.

The man, who alone and unaided was faced with the task of winning and retaining the emperor's good will, was no courtier as had been Loyola, the founder of the Society of Jesus. His father had been an overseer on the estate of a Spanish nobleman in Belgium. He himself had been educated at Louvain and had entered the Jesuit order as a young man. Ten years had been spent in study and teaching before he achieved his desire, which was to be sent to the

Orient. During those ten years he had made a reputation for himself as a brilliant mathematician. Presence of mind, a strict command over his temper and his words, unusual ability combined with immense learning—these were the dominant characteristics of Ferdinand Verbiest, the man who was appointed by the youthful emperor K'ang Hsi to the important post of royal astronomer.

In the beginning his position was far from secure. Intriguing against him at court was the party which had formerly supported Yam Kam Sien and the regents. The majority of the heads of the different tribunals, who in future were to be his colleagues, were both anti-foreign and anti-Christian in their sentiments. At Rome he had his own superiors to convince of the sincerity of his desire to spread the Christian religion, while at the same time he was obliged to devote his days to matters which were the antithesis to anything approaching the spiritual. Besides these serious difficulties, there were traits in the character of the emperor which sometimes made him despair of ever gaining his whole-hearted support.

K'ang Hsi at the age of fifteen was far from being sure of his own position. He was young and inexperienced, almost defiant in his determination to prove himself master, and he resented suggestions. Moreover, he suspected everyone with whom he came in contact of acting from ulterior motives. He had good reasons for his suspicions. His dynasty had reigned only a few years, during which time many vicissitudes had shaken people's belief in the stability of the throne. How could he wholly trust his Chinese subjects, who had been but recently conquered by his armies? Verbiest himself was only a foreigner; a Western barbarian and nothing more. If Verbiest accepted honours from him with reluctance, was it perhaps because he did not believe in the future of the Manchus and wished to stand well with both parties in case of a restoration of the Mings? The modesty of Verbiest and his disregard for wordly advantages increased these suspicions in the mind of the emperor. To reassure himself, K'ang Hsi placed a spy in the house of the Jesuits with orders to observe their actions and report on what they said.

The spy was a handsome Manchu youth, who ostensibly entered the Jesuit college for the purpose of studying

philosophy. He had been instructed to eagerly respond to any improper advances that might be made to him and to take part in any conspiracy in which he might be invited to join. But at the end of a year, spent in the company of the Fathers, the youth could say nothing against them. Torture was tried in an attempt to extract a confession, but he remained firm in his denial. So satisfactory was his report that the emperor announced to his ministers some time later :

“ I have taken pains to inform myself about these men and I am now persuaded that they teach us nothing that they do not practise themselves and that they are really as chaste as they appear to be to others.”⁽¹⁾

In a private letter written in Flemish, a language which he used almost as a code or cypher because it was completely unknown in the Orient, Verbiest spoke of the difficulties of his own position as well as of the character of the emperor.

“ The king is actually young for his age,” he wrote to his friend Father Couplet. “ He allows himself to be influenced by suggestions made by his courtiers and as a rule does not decide questions for himself. Everything must pass through the hands of the different tribunals. All this is very different from the practices of his father who, from his earliest youth, decided all questions for himself and often disregarded the opinion of the tribunals. All the favours which we have obtained up to now, the king has given to us in payment for the services which I have rendered him in the bureau of mathematics. This is sufficient reason for me to continue and gives me courage to go on.”⁽²⁾

For a conscientious Christian the position of royal astronomer was one that contained many pitfalls. Verbiest was often obliged to take the middle course with the emperor and his court. It was a question of compromise between the age-old superstitions of the Chinese and the exact scientific standards which he was attempting to introduce. He was forced to be diplomatic on occasions, such as the one on which the young emperor desired to start rebuilding a portion of the palace and asked his royal astronomer to name an auspicious day. Verbiest could not honestly accede to this request without admitting the existence of auspicious and inauspicious days, so he replied that while it was possible for him to name suitable days for agricultural pursuits, he

could find no connection between the stars and a day favourable for the undertaking which the emperor proposed. He regretted his inability to determine a question of this sort.

To soften his refusal he compiled with the help of Father Magalhaens a book which he knew would please K'ang Hsi. It was called "Memories of the Occident" and was written to satisfy the curiosity of the emperor in regard to the far-off lands of which he had heard but which he would never see. A little cautious flattery was also not out of place. Verbiest included the name of the young ruler in a calendar which he had compiled by royal command to cover a period of two thousand years. This gratified K'ang Hsi and was considered an event of such importance by his mandarins that they sent him their congratulations on having his name perpetuated.

Little by little the painstaking efforts of the Jesuit won the confidence of the monarch. At first the emperor saw in Father Verbiest only the director of his observatory, an official who was apparently intelligent and who did his work well. It was a long time before his interest was awakened by the personality of the man himself. In the end it was their mutual interest in science which drew them together.

Astronomy and engineering were to K'ang Hsi forms of relaxation. One day he called Verbiest to the palace and expressed a desire to study these subjects with him during his leisure hours. This necessitated the constant presence of Verbiest at the palace because the leisure hours of the emperor could never be determined upon in advance. The Jesuit would arrive early in the morning, when he was conducted to a room set aside for his use. Only in the evening was he allowed to return to his home. On his first visit the emperor sent for all the works on astronomy and mathematics which had previously been written by the Jesuits in the Chinese language. It was the wish of K'ang Hsi to have these explained to him.

Long conversations followed, continuing day after day. The suspicions of the emperor disappeared as he bent over charts and documents with Verbiest, both men so keenly interested in the subjects that age, rank, and nationality were for the moment forgotten. As their relations became more intimate the two would sit together before a table covered with books, while Verbiest explained the principles of Euclid, mathematics, trigonometry, astronomy, and other

similar subjects. When he was finally able to calculate an eclipse of himself or measure the height of a mountain, the pleasure of the emperor was intense.

During these lessons the ceremonious etiquette of the Chinese court was forgotten or brushed aside. China was a country in which the distance between the emperor and even the most important of his subjects was very great. Not only the nobles but even his relatives and his children were obliged to remain silent in his presence, only speaking to him on their knees when they had received permission to do so. Yet with this tutor of Western origin K'ang Hsi spent long hours every day, attended by a couple of young pages. At the noon hour the Jesuit would be sent his dinner, served on gold plate, and from time to time the emperor himself insisted on serving him *cha*, as tea was called at the palace, a drink which had only recently been introduced into England and which Pepys in his diary mentions as something new and strange.

The two elderly companions of Father Verbiest at the Jesuit college were occasionally called in to assist at the lessons. Buglio was a sinologue of no mean standing and the clever old fingers of Father Magalhaens could make wonderful watches and clocks for the royal palace. But all the honours which were given to the Jesuits went directly to Father Verbiest, who was made a mandarin of the first class with the title of *ta jen*, or "great man." From this time onward Verbiest continually wore his mandarin's robes over the rough shirt and iron chain of the Christian ascetic, in order, so he said, to be dressed in appropriate fashion when meeting the angels should he die suddenly.

In the year 1670 K'ang Hsi rewarded his tutor by granting him the desire which was closest to his heart. All the missionaries who had been banished to Canton during the reign of the regents were recalled. They were allowed to reopen their churches and resume their former posts. Although the prohibition against making new converts remained in force and was not abrogated until much later, it was a law which had fallen into abeyance and no longer interfered with the practise of the faith. After the return of the missionaries, K'ang Hsi accorded posthumous honours to Father Schall; an inscription was engraved on his tombstone recording for the benefit of posterity the position of

respect and influence which he had held at the Chinese court.

In the same year the Fathers Grimaldi and Pereira arrived in Peking. They were both Jesuit mathematicians and had been sent to the Orient to assist Verbiest. Grimaldi was a clever, industrious man who could turn his hand to anything and was continually thinking of new ways to please the emperor. Pereira was a fine musician. He could play any Chinese air by ear after he had once heard it, an accomplishment which never failed to astonish K'ang Hsi. It was Father Pereira who built the organ for the Jesuit church at Peking and when he played on it himself, the Chinese flocked to hear him, never having heard such music before.

From Father Pereira the emperor learned the principles of Western music. A spinet had been brought to Peking and K'ang Hsi, who was a skilled performer on Chinese instruments, soon learned to play several airs with tolerable skill. This interest continued throughout his life and a visitor to the court many years later remarked upon the number of spinets to be found in the imperial palace.

With his inherent ability enhanced by an alert, inquiring mind, the emperor made rapid progress in his studies, while the kindly Fathers stood by watching his development with a deep interest. It was a long time before the newcomers shared in the intimacy which the emperor granted so willingly to Father Verbiest. During the music lessons Pereira and Grimaldi stood in the traditional posture of respect, arms close to the sides, legs close together, while the emperor sat at the instrument, strumming a Christian hymn. But little did it matter to the Jesuits how long they were obliged to stand nor for how many hours they waited on his pleasure. They watched him with approval, secure in their belief that every chord he struck brought him closer to conversion and the day nearer when the Holy Roman Catholic Church would reign supreme as the one and true religion of this exceedingly strange land.

V

PEKING IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

Peking in the seventeenth century was a busy bustling city thronged with people. It had been chosen by the Manchus for their capital because it was located near the sea and within a convenient distance from the grand canal, the highway to the south. When the Manchus arrived the former inhabitants were driven from their homes in order to provide dwellings for the followers of the new emperor. In desperation the evicted Chinese built themselves a second city adjacent to the first so that Peking in the course of time became two separate cities divided from each other by high walls. One was known as the Tartar City, because it was inhabited by the Manchus, and the other as the Chinese City. Both cities were more or less the same in size and shape, but there the equality ended: the Manchus, on their side of the wall, enjoyed all the privileges which fall to the lot of the conqueror, while their neighbours were discriminated against in matters of taxation and tribute.

There were many evidences to show that the Chinese were a conquered nation. The great walls, fourteen miles in circumference and thirty feet high which surrounded both cities, were heavily guarded, and from towers, which were placed at regular intervals on the walls themselves, cannon pointed towards the crowded streets. Immense parade grounds had been constructed outside each of the gates leading to the city for military manœuvres. So impressive were these frequent displays of Manchu strength that they were sufficient to destroy any thoughts of open revolt on the part of the inhabitants and, during the reign of K'ang Hsi, Peking became one of the safest cities in the world. Crime had been suppressed and even minor robberies were a rare occurrence.

It was estimated that more than two million people resided within the walls, jostling and crowding one another, all living in the closest proximity. In the daytime the streets were thronged with men, for no women, other than those of the peasant class, were ever seen outside their own homes. Carts, camels, wagons, sedan chairs, men on horseback or

muleback mingled with pedestrians, who fought their way through the crowd. Mandarins and men of rank were preceded by footmen attempting to clear a way through the throng which, from time to time, became impassable because a fortune-teller, a juggler, or perhaps a vendor of quack medicines had caught the ear of the people. Such an impromptu audience, grouped about some favourite entertainer in the middle of the street, presented an impenetrable obstacle to those occupied with more important business.

As the streets were nothing more than great unpaved pathways, clouds of dust rose beneath the feet of men and beasts, soiling the silk boots of any nobleman who dared to put his foot to the ground. Le Comte, the French Jesuit, wrote :

“There is so much dust that the city is generally covered with a cloud of it, which makes its way into the closest closets, and notwithstanding the striving to allay it by continually sprinkling the streets, it is not only offensive but prejudicial to the health.”(1)

Icy winds in winter and a blazing sun in summer added to the discomfort of the populace. When the emperor rode abroad the roads were covered with yellow sand ; a symbol of imperial dignity and, at the same time, an attempt to eliminate dust.

The principal thoroughfares of the city were wide and straight, the most important one being one hundred and twenty feet wide and three miles in length. On either side of this street were shops selling porcelain or silk. Before each door was a board some twenty feet high, brilliantly painted and varnished, on which were written in large characters the list of commodities sold within. These signs added a gay note of colour to the drabness of buildings which, in the eyes of the few Europeans who saw them, were small and mean compared with those of other great cities. For the most part shops and houses consisted only of one story with here and there an upper part, which had been added as a dwelling place over a shop.

The streets throughout the city were policed by soldiers, easy-going guardians of the peace as long as all went well, but any sudden disturbance brought them running quickly to the spot. During the daytime they played only a nominal part in the life of the city ; at night, when it was very evident

that Peking was under martial law, they reigned supreme. At sunset, when the bustle and activity of the great city suddenly ceased, a curfew sent the inhabitants scurrying back to their homes. No one was allowed out after dark except on the most urgent business, while bodies of troops, stationed at frequent intervals, patrolled the streets all night. Some of the soldiers carried a kind of clapper with which they made a harsh noise so that the people would know when they heard the sound that the watch was going past.

Absence of lighting sent the inhabitants of Peking to bed early. This was not considered a hardship as it was a habit which dated from remote antiquity. For the Chinese people day had always begun at dawn, when the emperor held his first audience ; for many of the workers, however, it began two hours before the rising of the sun. The day ended at sunset when work was over and when it was time to rest. During the hours of darkness the city slept, sent to sleep by the noise of the clappers in the hands of Tartar soldiers as it had been sent to sleep for hundreds of years in the past by clappers in the hands of night watchmen. The hands which held the clappers changed, but the system remained the same. The Tartars had come, the Tartars would go ; but the clappers, wielded by the guardians of the peace, would continue to sound forever.

In the centre of the Tartar city, almost cutting it in two, was yet another great wall which enclosed a rectangular space two miles long and one mile wide. Inside this enclosure was the Forbidden City, built by the second emperor of the Ming dynasty and designed for the ceremonious and carefully regulated life of a Chinese emperor. Three gates offered admittance to the palace enclosure. One, known as the dynastic gate, was reserved for the use of the emperor ; the second gate was for the heir-apparent ; the third admitted all those who had business to transact at the palace. All three gates were heavily guarded day and night by soldiers, who carefully questioned anyone desiring admittance. Only the emperor, his servants, a few privileged mandarins, and certain government officials had their dwellings within the walls of the Forbidden City.

The emperor's palace was situated in the centre of the enclosure and surrounded by another high wall. The

palace itself was composed of nine great courts built in a straight line and connected with each other by marble arches. These courts were vast spaces which had been originally intended for the massing of great numbers of troops and they were surrounded by dwellings built upon stately marble terraces.

In the courts were all manner of strange objects : huge bronze vessels higher than a man which rang at a touch like temple bells, curiously shaped rocks, petrified wood from the Gobi desert, a meteorite, branching trees of coral and tall, thin shafts of greenish stone mounted on marble bases and carved in low relief. Like the homes of all important Chinese officials, the imperial palace was a vast collection of buildings joined together by courts and gardens and concealed from the world by high, massive walls. It was remarkable for its great size rather than for any individual feature. The Europeans who visited it were bewildered by the immense area which it covered. Most of them considered it imposing and magnificent, a worthy residence for a great sovereign, but Le Comte, the French Jesuit who, with scholarly precision minutely recorded all that he saw in China, was not so highly impressed as were many others.

"The whole thing has a sort of magnificence," he wrote, "and strikes one as being the palace of a great prince. But the imperfect ideal which the Chinese people have of art in general is responsible for certain grave defects even in this work. The apartments are not symmetrically disposed one behind the other ; in the decorations there is little regularity ; one sees nothing of the harmonious arrangement which gives to our own palaces their pleasing and com-mo-dious character." (2)

In Chinese eyes the magnificence of a building did not consist of the beauty of the architecture or in luxurious furniture and hangings. It was the thickness of the beams and pillars which supported the ceilings which was admired, or the excellence of the wood used in the construction of the building, or the fine carving on the gates and arches. None of these points were considered important by Le Comte, whose powers of observation were strongly biased in favour of all that he had left behind him in his beloved France. He was, however, impressed by the double roofs, which were covered with tiles of such a bright yellow that they shone like

gold against the deep blue of the sky. The roofs curved upwards at the edges and like all Asiatic roofs were derived from the tents used in the ancient encampments ; the form of the original tent being still recognizable.

"This stately palace doth furnish the king with the delight of walks, he hath goodly gardens enamelled with all sorts of flowers and watered with pleasant fountains," wrote Michel Baudier, referring to the imperial palace as it was at the time of the Mings. (3)

These "goodly gardens" were planned as far as possible in imitation of nature, with lakes and streams and miniature mountains and ornamented, not only with flowers and blossoming shrubs, but also with stones of varying sizes, which had been worn into strange shapes by the wind and rain or by some convulsion of nature, such as a volcanic upheaval. The world, as it was known to the Chinese people, would be searched for some such strange bit of nature's rare and often grotesque carving to be used for a purely decorative purpose.

When space permitted a small deer park was built in the garden. One of these little parks was used by the emperor K'ang Hsi as a breeding place for tigers which were afterwards released in a great walled forest near Peking where he often went to hunt. As fishing was one of his favourite sports, the streams which flowed through the palace gardens were always well stocked. "Remember your wives in your pleasures," he would say when he presented a guest with a fish caught with his own hand. In winter, when the lakes and streams were frozen, skating became a popular sport and fine exhibitions of figure skating were given for the benefit of the court.

The apartments inhabited by the emperor were larger and more important than any others and were approached by a carved marble incline, known as the "dragon's path", over which his litter was carried by bearers who mounted the steps on either side. The carvings consisted of curiously wrought dragons, one of the devices of imperial authority. The dragon of Eastern symbolism was far from being the gruesome monster of European mediæval imagination ; in China it was considered to be the genius of strength and goodness, the spirit of change and therefore the emblem of life itself. Every temple where the emperor worshipped and

every palace which he inhabited was approached by one of these "dragon paths"; the one giving him access to the Temple of Heaven at Peking being especially magnificent because of its great length and remarkably fine decoration.

At the top of a series of terraces, each one surrounded by a marble balustrade, was the hall which contained the emperor's throne. It stood in the middle of a raised platform and "somewhat resembled an altar which opens with two doors and in it the emperor's seat about an ell high covered with black sables on which he sat with his legs across under him". (4) No other seats were needed in the great hall. No one was allowed to sit in the emperor's presence, except during a banquet, when the guests sat on cushions on the floor and very small tables were brought in and one placed before every two persons. Near the throne stood great bronze candlesticks in the form of birds, which were used for holding torches, almost the only form of decoration in a hall which, according to Le Comte, contained "neither looking glasses, tapestries nor wrought chairs". (5)

The glorious tapestry sent to the Ming emperor in the year 1616 by Marie de Medicis, queen mother of France, had disappeared, although the Fleming who had been charged to present it had assured the queen that: "The king of China would cause a rich hall to be built, proportionable to the tapestry where he would hang it and esteem it the richest *meuble* of his palace." (6)

Bare walls and tiled floors strewn with rugs gave the vast hall an austere appearance, but this was changed when the dignitaries of the empire, dressed in their magnificent robes and splendid jewels, came to court to be present at an audience or some other entertainment given at the palace. At such a time the hall acquired a new beauty. Then it appeared as an appropriate and dignified background for the dragon robes of the emperor and the ceremonial costumes of his courtiers.

Only formal audiences were held in the great hall during the reign of K'ang Hsi, because he preferred to receive his guests in a pleasant circular room where he remained seated on a divan with his legs crossed under him and with books and writing materials near at hand. After all, he had been born a Tartar, and the courtly manners of the Chinese

wearied the sons of nomads and took some time for them to imitate. Ritualistic ceremonies were in keeping with the Confucian training of the Chinese officials, whose walk was always slow and stately and whose posture, whether sitting or standing, was rigidly formal. The Tartars, unlike so many semi-barbaric nations of the times, had the inestimable advantage of stepping into a long established civilization which they were only obliged to imitate. Left to themselves, they would undoubtedly have remained in a more or less primitive state for centuries to come. But so strong was the power of suggestion and so subtle the influence of the Chinese people that in the rich setting of the palace Manchu nobles soon learned to copy the manners and customs of the people they had conquered, because, as Le Comte said : "The Tartars are valiant and withal men of sense."

VI

WOMEN AND TREASURE

"Within the palace," wrote one of the emperor's Jesuit biographers, "are entertained great numbers of young maids chosen out of the fairest of the whole empire to be at the disposal of their prince ; and it is an ancient custom among the Tartars not to marry any of their daughters but what has first been presented to the emperor who, without further formality may retain which he pleases of them for his own use." (1)

Despite the ancient custom, K'ang Hsi, who was a frugal man and economical in all his habits, maintained fewer concubines than had his predecessors. These ladies lived in courts and apartments which were reserved for their use in the palace.

During his long reign K'ang Hsi had four empresses, of whom little is known except their names and the fact that the first two died while he was yet a young man. He survived his third empress by a few years, while his fourth, the mother of his successor, retained the rank of a concubine until her son ascended the throne when she was given the title of empress-dowager. Had K'ang Hsi been more interested in women the charming ladies of the palace would doubtless have played a more important part in his life, but as it was he preferred to spend his leisure hours in hunting, fishing, riding, or studying rather than in the society of women. It was said that one of the reasons why he enjoyed taking long journeys was because after his first expedition to the tombs of his ancestors no women, with the exception of his grandmother on one occasion, were allowed to follow the court. His health and spirits improved when he left the ladies behind. It was recorded that :

"The present emperor walks in the same steps as his father but women have less power over him. It is not that he has ceased to love them, but that he loves them in such a manner that if he is weak enough to make them mistresses of his heart he has strength enough to prevent their empire extending over his reason." (2)

The Jesuit fathers seldom came in contact with these



THE EMPEROR K'ANG HSI

unseen inhabitants of the palace. It was considered a great breach of etiquette even to be aware of their existence. But the lively Father Rippa, who was court painter at the end of the century, managed to have a peep at them from time to time while he was working. He wrote that the emperor would often spend hours in their society immersed in a book. According to Father Rippa, K'ang Hsi enjoyed the society of a woman as long as she remained perfectly quiet and neither moved nor spoke. The priest himself occasionally forgot his holy calling for a sufficient length of time to pass judgment on the palace ladies, whose beauty he did not admire. He compared one of them in the most unflattering terms to the Buddhist goddess of mercy, Kwan Yin.

The court ladies, like other Manchu and Chinese women of rank, spent a great deal of time at their toilet despite the fact that they seldom left their own courts. Their hair was elaborately dressed and held in place with jade or gold ornaments exquisitely inlaid with kingfisher feathers. Styles in headdress did not change rapidly in old China; hair ornaments worked with kingfisher feathers had been in vogue at the time of Confucius, five hundred years before the birth of Christ.

The clothes of the younger women were made of bright colours and varied as to material and decoration according to the seasons. Older women wore dark colours and plain silks like the men and in the privacy of their own homes they often wound a piece of silk about their heads instead of dressing their hair. Women over forty thought little of their own physical charms and a great deal about those of their daughters. Marriage was the ultimate aim of a young girl's life and the practical Chinese mind saw no reason for female beauty after the age of childbearing was over. "Golden lily" feet were distinctly an asset in the marriage market, although foot-binding was a fashion which the active Manchus never tolerated. The wives of the emperor K'ang Hsi, like all other women of their race, allowed their feet to grow to natural size and wore shoes with high heels placed directly under the arch of the foot. K'ang Hsi made one attempt to abolish the custom of foot-binding, but his edict was received with so much opposition throughout the country that he thought it best to have it repealed.

In the palace, and only open for inspection on rare

occasions, were the treasure rooms which contained sufficient objects of luxury and beauty to satisfy the desires of the most exacting court lady. In these rooms were to be found bronzes, jades, ranging in colour from the soft "moonlight" to the dark brown "Han" and carved so that every bit of the inherent beauty of the stone was magnified, vases of different metals, precious stones, curious marbles, pearls found in the rivers of Tartary which were small but very much prized, the finest silks, which included those made for the emperor and his family and which were superior to all others, skins of animals, fur-lined garments which were sometimes given away as presents, and even bows and arrows, weapons of every sort, saddles, and the rare and expensive drugs, such as *ginseng*, used for medicinal purposes. Many examples of the arts of previous dynasties were also hidden away in these rooms; bells and cauldrons dating from the Chou dynasty of two thousand years ago, which were prized above all modern treasures, and bits of colourful Sung ceramic ware, superior in their chaste beauty to anything that the living potters, ceaselessly at work during the reign of K'ang Hsi could produce.

The apartments inhabited by the ladies, like all the other great rooms in the palace, were supplied with adequate heat to keep the temperature moderate even in the middle of winter. Great stoves, placed outside the doors, transmitted heat to the different apartments by means of pipes laid under the floors. It was an economical system as well as an efficient one because the stoves were constructed in such a way that they burned very little fuel. Foreigners who visited the court considered this method of heating far superior to anything known in Europe at the same period. Many mentioned it in their letters, and a Dutch ambassador sent to China in the eighteenth century wrote about it in a book which he dedicated to George Washington.

"To defend them from the piercing cold which they experience in the northern part of the empire, the Chinese have devised subterraneous furnaces, placed outside the houses in excavations made on purpose. Tubes go branching off from these furnaces in every direction under the bricks of the floors and under a kind of platform on which the Chinese sleep. They even pass through the walls which divide the different rooms so that the heat diffused by these tubes produces in the apartments the temperature desired."(3)

Transportation inside the walls of the palace was something of a problem because of the great distances to be traversed. Mandarins and princes were permitted to ride on horseback as far as the third court. To ride farther was a privilege reserved for the emperor alone. When Father Verbiest received the appointment of royal astronomer, he, as a high mandarin, was permitted to ride as far as the third court, a great honour which was in time extended to all the members of the Jesuit order.

"We were informed by the guards," wrote Father Grimaldi, "that in future we would not be required to enter the palace on foot as the emperor did not demand it of anyone with whom he was on such terms as ourselves."

Sedan chairs were the usual means of transporting visitors inside the palace, because it was a quarter of an hour's walk from the outer gate to the emperor's private apartments, a long distance for an elderly man to cover on foot.

The clothing worn by the men depended on their rank and station in life. It consisted of a long vest extending to the ground which varied in material and ornament according to the wealth and position of the wearer. In the case of princes and mandarins, it was fastened together by buttons usually made of gold or silver, although sometimes of jade or precious stones. A broad sash was tied about the waist in the seventeenth century, but was abandoned at a later date. Long sleeves, wide at the shoulders, tapered towards the wrist until they ended in a point which concealed all but the tips of the fingers. The hands, of which their owners were very proud, were sufficiently exposed to show the long nail on the little finger, an indication that its owner was not obliged to do any form of manual work. Over the vest a loose coat varying in length was worn. As for undergarments :

"They used in summer only a single pair of drawers of white taffety under a broad shirt of the same stuff ; but in winter they had a linen shirt and under it breeches of coarse satin quilted with raw silk." (4)

When the emperor K'ang Hsi received the Russian ambassador Ysbrantes Ides towards the end of the century, His Excellency remarked :

"The dress of the monarch consisted of a common, dark-coloured damask waist-coat, a coat of deep blue satin adorned

with ermine, besides which he had a string of coral hanging about his neck and down on his breast. He had a warm cap on, turned up with sable, to which was added a red silk knot and some peacock feathers hanging down behind. His hair was plaited into one lock and hung behind him. He had no gold nor jewels about him. On his feet were boots made of black velvet.”(5)

Black, blue, or violet were the colours worn by the men, although brighter shades were used for ceremonial occasions. Yellow was the imperial colour, reserved exclusively for the use of the emperor, but all court gowns presented a fine appearance, especially in winter, when they were bordered as well as lined with priceless furs. In summer all the men wore small hats, shaped like a funnel and covered with rattan. Ceremonial caps were of much the same shape but the point at the top of the crown was decorated with a jewelled button, the colour and quality of which indicated the wearer's rank.

“Nothing could be handsomer than their caps,” remarked Le Comte, “but they are so shallow that they always discover the ears.”

These heavy costumes worn by the courtiers seemed cumbersome to Europeans but they were never able to convince the Chinese that their own were in any way superior. The large curled wigs in vogue in Europe at the time appeared ridiculous to the humorous Chinese, who suggested that artificial beards would be quite as sensible. They made jokes about the close knee-breeches and tight silk stockings worn by Westerners at the court, which were considered neither elegant nor appropriate. The Jesuits had long since found it expedient to adopt the dress of the country and only ambassadors and the gentlemen in their suites clung to the garments which seemed so absurd to their hosts. With the advent of the Manchus, fashions in men's dress had undergone a change at the command of the conquerors. The “pigtail” or long braid of hair at the back of the head had been made obligatory in place of the former custom of oiling the hair heavily before brushing it back from the face. The change was deeply resented by the conquered nation; although it was a small matter it remained a constant reminder of past and present humiliations.

Chinese monarchs had accepted as a matter of course

the luxuries and distractions of court life as well as the confinement of the palace from which they seldom emerged. The first few rulers of the Manchu dynasty thought differently. They were strong, lusty men whose forefathers had been used to hard riding and hard drinking, eating their food half raw and continually moving from place to place. K'ang Hsi, himself only two generations removed from the wandering nomads, often longed for the open spaces and freer life of his native land. He left the palace when he could for one of his two country places near Peking or for a day's hunting.

As he passed rapidly through the streets he was constantly reminded that he and his followers constituted only a small minority surrounded by millions of an alien race. The Chinese had accepted the Manchu pigtail, they bowed their heads before the cannon which were always pointing at them from the walls of the city, but the emperor was far too intelligent not to realize that beneath the calm of the surface lay the slumbering threat of revolt. It was inevitable that one day it would break out and menace his throne and his dynasty. A few years after the downfall of the regents, the storm which had been long brewing burst suddenly over his head.

VII

THE REVOLT OF THE SLAVES

The part played by the Chinese secret societies in the revolt against the Manchus, which broke out during the youth of the emperor K'ang Hsi, will probably never be known. It is an historical fact, however, that during the reigns of all the Ch'ing emperors China was honeycombed with organizations whose slogan was death to the conquerors. In the year 1803 twenty thousand members of an organization known as the White Feather were executed for taking part in an attempt to capture the imperial palace at Peking. Later in the same century the activities of the Hung League, known as the Heaven and Earth Society, were largely responsible for the terrible T'ai-p'ing rebellion, which depopulated large portions of the country. Although the disposition of the Chinese people was peaceful and their dislike of war was proved over and over again during the centuries, no foreign dynasty ever succeeded in remaining permanently on the throne. By their own methods and in their own way the Chinese eventually drove all invaders back to the place from whence they had come.

Secret societies, used as a means of ridding the empire of enemies and aliens, represented no new development in the history of the Middle Kingdom. The White Lily Society, which flourished during the reign of K'ang Hsi and which was one of the most powerful and most dreaded of them all, was first heard of in the second century A.D., when a certain Taoist priest assembled eighteen neophytes in a temple for the purpose of practising meditation. Although the original White Lily Society disappeared from view for a thousand years, it was sufficiently powerful at the time of the Mongol invasion for a realistic emperor of the Yuan dynasty to take steps to suppress it. At that time its members were accused of possessing a knowledge of the black arts. Intermittently, until the days of the Manchus, the White Lily was one of the many organizations which came under the protection of the Taoists, a sect which combined religious ceremonial with a belief in magic and which at one time or another became powerful because

some credulous emperor wished to brew the Elixir of Life with the assistance of the Taoist priests.

Both the White Lily and the society known as the Hung League had initiation rites and symbolical rituals of such a nature as to bind the members together and unite them against a common foe. One of these rites consisted of giving the candidate for admission a bowl of water with the words :—

“ Wash the filth of Ch'ing from off your countenance with the water of three rivers, then your true countenance may appear and your mouth will be closed.”(1)

When the new member was accepted by the society he discarded his Manchu vest with the long sleeves and donned the prohibited garments of the Ming period which, according to law, he was only permitted to wear at his own burial. Inside the many buildings where the societies held their meetings, the members of the different organizations always dressed as their fathers had dressed under the former dynasty. It is significant that the first act of Wu San Kuei, the famous Chinese general, when he headed the revolt against the Manchus, was to follow the example of the initiates of the secret societies in the matter of clothing. The Mings, even in the days of their degeneracy, were never hated by the people as were the Manchus, who came from a foreign land.

Although the activities of the secret societies remained dormant under the rule of native emperors, they sprang into prominence once more at a time of foreign aggression, when they were supported by the dissatisfied portion of the population and provided rare breeding grounds for intrigue and insidious propaganda. K'ang Hsi, himself a student of history and a wide reader, had from the beginning of his reign showed himself to be the enemy of subversive organizations. When he issued severe edicts against the Taoists, whom he believed to be discontented trouble-makers, he took steps to suppress all the societies whose activities he mistrusted. Members of the White Lily were treated as criminals and severely punished when their association with the society was disclosed.

Although the uprising against the Manchus, which took place in the year 1674, appeared on the surface to be a sudden crisis, it can be regarded in quite a different light

if the policy of the White Lily and other similar societies are taken into consideration. Leaders of this revolt, like the leaders of revolts at other periods, had been secretly trained over a period of years by well organized and powerful groups of men. It needed only a leader of the importance of Wu San Kuei to place himself at the head of the rebels for the uprising to spread with incredible swiftness throughout the southern provinces where Taoist priests, leaders of secret societies, and other vocal patriots had been preaching for years the advantages of revolution. K'ang Hsi and his ministers had foreseen the danger when they had attempted to suppress the societies. What they had not anticipated was that Wu San Kuei, their old friend and ally, would take up arms against them.

Many years had passed since Wu San Kuei had joined the Manchus and had fought with them against the rebels who had taken possession of Peking after the death of the Ming emperor. As a reward for his great services he had been given the title of prince and had been made viceroy of two rich southern provinces. For many years he had been able to live in great magnificence on estates that were vast and inaccessible, far removed from the control of the court. He had built for himself a splendid palace and had employed his leisure by collecting an extensive library of rare books. No doubt he had also built a theatre and had indulged a taste for amateur acting which had given him no little pleasure in his youth. For the people of his provinces he had constructed great parks and pleasure gardens, which provided them with amusement and made them content with his rule. The Manchus had no quarrel with these peaceful activities. Wu San Kuei had proved to be as efficient an administrator as he had been a resourceful general.

Had Wu San Kuei been a viceroy directly under the control of the court, and had his provinces been governed by mandarins appointed for the purpose by the emperor, he would have presented no unusual problem to the government at Peking. But Wu was one of three powerful Chinese princes who, at the time of the Manchu invasion, had been made semi-independent rulers of their own states in return for outstanding services rendered to the invaders. This method of rewarding great nobles had been popular under the Mings, but K'ang Hsi disliked it because he thought that

all the provinces should be under his own direct control. He had, however, taken no steps to suppress it, believing that the moment was not yet ripe. The south had never submitted as unconditionally to the Manchus as had the north and as long as there was peace K'ang Hsi thought it wiser to leave things as they were.

It was not until the emperor heard through his spies that Wu San Kuei had opened direct communication with the powerful Dalai Lama and was importing thousands of horses from Mongolia through Tibet, a step which for centuries had been considered as a necessary part of all preparations for war, that his suspicions were aroused. Reports also reached him that Wu was storing vast quantities of arms and that he had stationed guards at the land and water approaches to his provinces. Such definite evidences of a contemplated revolt alarmed the ministers of the crown. They urged the emperor to act before it was too late.

Wu San Kuei had always been a picturesque figure in China's politics and in his old age with his long ears and prominent aquiline nose he still remained an important personage. Too vital to be ignored and too powerful not to have his intentions questioned, he presented a problem which the emperor was reluctantly forced to face.

The situation was further complicated because it was many years since Wu San Kuei had left his comfortable home in order to pay his respects to the emperor in person. As it was a long journey for an old man to make, he had requested his son, who lived at court as a hostage for his father's loyalty, to do homage on his behalf. This arrangement was satisfactory to K'ang Hsi. The son of Wu had been given an imperial princess in marriage and was respected and liked at court. As long as Wu San Kuei's actions remained unquestioned, his prolonged absence was not considered due to any lack of deference towards the throne. It was only when he was reported guilty of deeds which suggested treasonable intentions, that the emperor was urged to insist on his personal appearance at court.

K'ang Hsi himself did not believe that Wu San Kuei intended to revolt. He explained the war-like reports which had reached him as measures of defence which the viceroy was taking for the protection of his own provinces. But as his ministers held the contrary opinion and the emperor

seldom acted against their advice, he said nothing of his own convictions. Instead he followed the advice he had received and sent two mandarins to Hunan with an order for Wu San Kuei to appear at court. It was not K'ang Hsi's intention to interfere with the old man who had fought so ably under the Manchu standard, but he complied with the request of his ministers to satisfy them that the rumours they had heard were exaggerated and that in reality there was nothing to fear.

The dispatch of the two mandarins much alarmed the son of Wu. He knew nothing of the emperor's benevolent intentions, but he had heard the rumours which had been circulating at the capital and he feared that should his father obey the order, this would lead to his arrest and imprisonment when he reached Peking. To forestall such an eventuality the son sent off a letter by a trusted courier in which he reported what he had heard and urged his father to disregard the emperor's command.

As the courier travelled night and day he reached the distant province of Hunan in advance of the two mandarins sent by K'ang Hsi, and Wu San Kuei had the opportunity to read his son's letter before they arrived. When the mandarins finally appeared they were entertained with all the honours befitting their rank and the importance of their mission, but their host refused to return with them to Peking. Instead he threatened that if his present status were interfered with, or if he were further pressed to leave his provinces, he would appear at the gates of the capital with an army of eighty thousand men. These were rash words and Wu San Kuei knew that they would lead to war. There was no time to be lost if he wished to be the first to strike. As soon as his unwelcome guests had departed he proclaimed himself the founder of a new dynasty and raised the standard of revolt against the Manchus.

The uprising was popular as the ground had been carefully prepared. In a short time the whole south was ablaze. Not only the two provinces governed by Wu San Kuei rose in revolt but the adjacent provinces of Szechwan joined him and the other two semi-independent princes, fearing for their own status, decided to make his cause their own. Wu was a fine general who had the ability to inspire his men. The name he chose for his dynasty, that of the Chou, appealed

to the people as it was the same as that of the mighty dynasty of antiquity which had brought honour and glory to China.

In Peking the son of Wu was preparing for the day when the news of his father's revolt would reach the emperor. He knew that when that happened, he and his family would pay the penalty for treason. The time was short if he wished to save himself. In his mind he had evolved a clever plan which appeared to have a good chance of success. With the help of secret adherents concealed throughout the city, he had already commenced to organize the slaves of the Manchu nobles into an army which would fall upon their masters and destroy them through force of numbers. No one would dream of suspecting the slaves, least of all the emperor, who looked further afield for his enemies.

The uprising was planned to take place on the first day of the new year when the princes and mandarins went to the palace to render homage to their ruler. On such an occasion they wore their ceremonial costumes and were without weapons, as no subject was allowed to carry arms in the presence of the emperor. The slaves knew they had little to lose and much to gain by taking part in such a conspiracy. Many of them were former prisoners of war, who served their conquerors with little love and less loyalty. They were flattered when a nobleman of rank and standing took an interest in them and joyfully promised their aid.

Little by little the details of the conspiracy were disclosed to the cleverest and bravest of the slaves. On the first day of the new year the gates of the palace would be opened from inside by those who were pledged to join the uprising. Once the gates were open the rabble of desperate men already massed outside would force its way in, overcome the guards, and fall upon the unarmed nobles. Could they but take the emperor prisoner, the leaders of the conspiracy believed that they would be able to dictate terms to the Manchus.

Had all the Manchus been hated by their slaves as the son of Wu San Kuei had anticipated, the plot might have succeeded. Unfortunately for the conspirators there was one slave who regarded his master in quite a different light. This was a man in the household of Ma-tse, an important Manchu nobleman, who was idolized by all those who served him. Ma-tse had the reputation of being an honourable man, just and kindly in his dealings with others. His slaves, far from

regarding him as a tyrant turned to him for protection and help. It was the memory of many past benefits which troubled the heart of the slave in the household of Ma-tse on the evening before the uprising was scheduled to take place. How could he betray the man whom he had revered as a father and allow him to go to his death? In the end remorse overcame him, his guilt seemed more than he could bear and going to his master he threw himself at his feet and confessed his knowledge of a plot which threatened the life of the emperor.

Ma-tse acted promptly. Calling for his horse and bidding his slave follow him, he raced through the streets to the palace. When he arrived the gates leading to the Forbidden City had been closed for the night. The guards refused to listen to his demand that he be allowed to enter. Such a request was unheard of and contrary to all rules of propriety. In the end, convinced of the urgency of his message, the consent of the emperor was sought while Ma-tse waited in suspense at the gate. K'ang Hsi proved easier to persuade than his officials. He knew the loyal character of the man who was making such an unprecedented request. In the middle of the night Ma-tse followed by his slave, was admitted to the emperor's bed-chamber.

K'ang Hsi at once realized the gravity of the situation. Orders were immediately given to double the guards of the palace and allow none but officials to be admitted next day. So quickly was action taken that before day had dawned the son of Wu San Kuei, his friends, and accomplices were under arrest. Owing to the intervention of a humble slave the danger was averted and the uprising never took place.

All the persons implicated in the plot were speedily condemned to death, but later pardoned by command of the emperor with the exception of the ringleaders and the son and grandsons of Wu San Kuei. Although connected by marriage with the reigning house the latter were immediately put to death, as it was the custom for the children of a man accused of treason to perish with him; a cruel practice but one that dated from remote antiquity. In this case as in many others, the children died with the father so that in the future no member of the family would be left alive to avenge an act of justice.

Scarcely had this danger been averted before word reached the capital of the revolt of Wu San Kuei. Day after

day couriers arrived from the south bringing news of fresh disturbances. The revolt was spreading rapidly. It was said the rebels were advancing towards Peking. In the city the people were terrified, believing that the horrors which had been experienced during the sack of the capital at the fall of the Ming dynasty were to be repeated once more. His ministers begged the emperor to take immediate action but their advice was unnecessary. No one knew better than K'ang Hsi the danger to which he was exposed. Millions could take up arms against him while his own soldiers were but a handful. It seemed madness after the recent conspiracy to send away the troops which were guarding Peking, but that was the only course left open to him. Every man at his disposal must be used to check the revolt. If his forces were insufficient to take the offensive, at least they could strive to check the advance of the rebels towards the northern provinces.

In this serious emergency the emperor proved worthy of his heritage. The scholarly young man, not yet twenty years old, with studious tastes and a love of Western learning, became overnight a military leader worthy of the best traditions of his House. Everyone expected him to remove with his court to the province of Liao-tung, the original home of the Manchus. Even Father Verbiest prepared to accompany him as he was convinced that the emperor would be forced to flee. But K'ang Hsi had no such intention. Moving swiftly from place to place, he conferred with his generals, issued orders, and took steps to calm the panic-stricken people. No detail regarding the comfort or efficiency of his troops was considered unworthy of his attention. His days were filled with ceaseless activity while he prepared for the coming campaign.

It was no war of conquest to which he was sending his soldiers. On the contrary it was a war that threatened the existence of his own people and all those who had loyally supported him. The time for another test of strength between Chinese and Tartar had come and after thirty years of peace the old struggle was to be renewed. During the weeks of the crisis the people came to understand, perhaps for the first time, that in their young emperor they had a strong and determined ruler. It was his own personal courage which inspired others with a belief in the ultimate victory of Manchu arms.

VIII

SHIELD AND SPEAR

It was the necessity for allies to aid him in crushing the rebellion that directed the thoughts of the emperor K'ang Hsi to the Mongols living to the north-west of the empire. Although many of the chieftains were already fighting with his armies, there were others living at a distance who had not responded when he called the fighting men of the clans to war.

The original policy of friendship between the two peoples, instituted by the great Manchu leader, T'ai Tsung, at the time of his conquest of the Imperial Jade Seal, had been continued by K'ang Hsi. To strengthen the alliance, intermarriage had been encouraged and young girls related to the reigning house had been sent as brides to powerful nomad khans. At the court the influence of the empress-dowager had been used to further this friendship, while the lama priests in her suite, as well as the many Mongol princes at the capital, had served to remind the emperor that he owed his throne, not only to his own followers, but also to the support and loyalty of his nomad vassals.

The Mongols were no longer united as they had been in the thirteenth century under the leadership of Genghis Khan. Since the fall of the Yuan dynasty in China they had been scattered over a vast area and lack of unity between them as well as disputes between the different tribes had made the distances seem even greater than they were. The extraordinary system of roads and rest houses established by Genghis Khan and his immediate successors, had fallen into disuse while the Mongols had been slowly deteriorating during the centuries ; a state of affairs partially due to the pacific influence of the Buddhists and the encouragement given to the people to dedicate their sons to the priesthood. This system burdended the nomads with the support of an enormous number of non-productive, celibate men, who lived on others and contributed little to the wellbeing of their compatriots.

Although many of the Mongol princes recognized the sovereignty of the Manchu emperor, the degree of independence enjoyed by each khan depended to a certain extent

upon his geographical position—the greater the distance from the court the greater the liberty of the individual khan. In the hearts of many of these isolated nomads the dream of the restoration of a Mongol dynasty in China had never quite faded. It remained in the background until a leader should arise who would unite the tribes as they had once been united before. Many of the Mongol chieftains had no love for their Manchu overlords and any sign of weakness on the part of the central government was certain to be interpreted as an omen favourable to their cause.

The uprising against the Manchus brought renewed hope to the restless inhabitants of the Gobi and instead of the assistance which K'ang Hsi had anticipated a new and unexpected enemy dared to raise his head. Mongolia, or Western Tartary as it was sometimes called, had been the original home of many conquerors of the Chinese people when effete emperors on the Dragon Throne had been unable to withstand the pressure of nomad hordes, driven by hunger to leave their own barren land where life was a continual struggle against the ferocity of nature and where there was seldom sufficient food for both men and beasts. The rich plains of the Yellow River, and the fabulous wealth of the Chinese empire which, in the eyes of the nomads assumed almost legendary proportions, provided the stimulus which since time immemorial had driven the fighting men of the clans to war. Conditions had not changed in the seventeenth century. Nature remained relentless and the same old ambitions prevailed. The alliance between Manchus and Mongols rested on the slender thread of Manchu supremacy. Once that thread was broken, nothing could prevent the tribes streaming through the breaks in the Great Wall.

Among the Mongol princes who dreamed of taking the place of the emperor K'ang Hsi and ruling himself over the Chinese people, was one called Satchar. Swift horsemen had brought him news of the revolt against the Manchus and of the defenceless state of the capital when the bannermen left for the front. Instead of preparing to assist the emperor in his extremity, Satchar conceived the idea of capturing Peking for himself. To procure the necessary troops he sent messengers to the leaders of clans allied to his own asking for support in an attempt to invade China. So

welcome was the request that when the couriers returned they brought with them the promise of a hundred thousand fighting men, a sufficient force to crush the Manchus should they be caught between the Mongol army and the forces under the command of Wu San Kuei. Soon tents were folded on the distant steppes, cattle driven from pasture, and oxen hitched to the heavy carts as the tribes prepared to move.

Fortunately for the emperor K'ang Hsi, such preparations took time and his spies kept him well informed. He knew that the Mongols were rising against him and that one day, should events be allowed to take their course, swift horsemen would appear on his northern boundary to plunder his lands as they had been plundered by other nomads before. Now that he was the emperor his point of view had changed from that of his ancestors who had only possessed the province of Liao-tung. They had looked upon the lands of the Chinese people as their rightful prey. He, on the contrary, regarded them as a divine trust, inherited from his father and only to be relinquished to his son. He would defend China, not because his ancestors had conquered the country, but because it was his duty to do so, his sacred obligation to the many millions of his subjects.

The danger was acute and the emperor realized that his only chance was to act before the allies of Satchar had time to reach him. Although K'ang Hsi had no personal knowledge of Western Tartary, as he had been born and bred in China, he had heard from Bochita, his grandmother, and from the friendly Mongols at the court of the great distances to be traversed in that country and of the preparations which must be made before the tribes were ready for war. He had no adequate maps to help him judge the distances, but he was told that had he troops at his disposal there was yet time for him to make a sudden raid across the Liao River, as his grandfather, the great T'ai Tsung, had once done, and strike at Satchar before he was prepared to retaliate.

The only troops at the emperor's disposal that were not already engaged in fighting against the southern rebels were those which had been left behind by the Manchus to guard the province of Liao-tung. Although there was grave danger in leaving the province unguarded, close as it was to the territory of the Mongols, the emperor was obliged to take

this step. To supplement their number, a small army was raised of the soldiers remaining in Peking. Night watchmen abandoned their clappers, patrols left off marching through the streets and hastened to join their comrades from Liaotung. The combined force, although small in numbers, was commanded by able and experienced officers. A surprise attack was made against Satchar and he was defeated before he was able to obtain support. When he took the road to Peking it was not as an invader, as he had planned, but as a prisoner going to execution by order of the emperor whom he had betrayed.

With the defeat of Satchar the Mongol revolt subsided as quickly as it had begun. Without a leader the allies of the captive prince dared not go on. They returned to their grazing grounds, set up their tents and put their herds out to pasture as if nothing at all had happened. K'ang Hsi had no wish to punish them. They were his vassals and he desired to live with them in peace. He informed the rebellious khans that although he knew of their treachery, future good behaviour would banish the incident from his mind.

He had learned a valuable lesson. He realized that the Mongol princes must be constantly reminded of the power of the Manchus if peace was to be maintained without bloodshed. The revolt of Satchar, small, unimportant, and quickly suppressed, had far-reaching results in the matter of policy. It determined K'ang Hsi to make frequent trips into Western Tartary and eventually he established a summer residence and many rest houses beyond the Great Wall. Jehol, the famous summer palace of the Manchus emperors, was built by K'ang Hsi in a region which was selected because it was close to the eastern border of the territory of the Mongols and in a convenient spot for them to visit him each year. As Genghis Khan had demanded personal submission from his princes and generals in the thirteenth century, so K'ang Hsi four hundred years later revived the same system of yearly meetings with hunts and banquets on a large scale.

While Satchar and the Mongols had been gathering their forces, the main body of the emperor's army had been fully occupied with the revolt in the south. During a period of seven years the provinces south of the Yangtse River remained in a state of open warfare. Fortunately for the

Manchus, dissensions and petty jealousies among the rebel princes weakened their cause and prevented them from showing a united front. The allies of Wu San Kuei wasted their time and substance quarrelling with each other because each prince was jealous of his own privileges and one did not wish to yield to the other. As time wore on dissatisfaction increased. It was discovered that Wu San Kuei was no more inclined to listen to unreasonable demands than the Manchus had been before him. A change of masters was all that the princes felt they had achieved.

Had K'ang Hsi possessed sufficient strength to take the offensive, and had his troops been provided with better arms sooner, the revolt would have been suppressed at an earlier date. But as he dared not risk an invasion he wasted neither men nor money in futile attacks. His policy was to prevent the revolt from spreading and conserve his own forces for the final thrust.

When the tide of battle turned definitely in favour of the Manchus and the southern princes found that their resources were diminishing day by day, the prince of Foukien, one of the rebels, turned for assistance to the so-called king of Formosa. It was a desperate step to take even at a time of crisis because the king of Formosa was the son of Koxinga, a famous pirate, and belonged to a family notorious for its unlawful activities on the high seas. So troublesome did this ally become, and so insistent were his demands for territory and tribute, that the prince of Foukien foresaw his own ruin should the pirates be allowed to remain on his soil. As the lesser of two evils, he turned to the Manchus and offered them a separate peace in return for assistance against the pirates.

K'ang Hsi was quite willing to aid one enemy destroy another. He sent troops to the province of Foukien and drove the pirates back to their ships. They were allowed to escape as a naval battle was impossible in the circumstances and would have to be postponed until a more opportune time. The unfortunate prince of Foukien, although rid of the pirates, found himself no better than a prisoner in the hands of the Manchus. While he received permission to remain in his capitol and retain his personal guards, the Manchus took over the government and stationed large bodies of troops in the cities and towns.

This policy of placing large or small bodies of isolated soldiers at frequent intervals throughout the empire proved in the long run to be disastrous ; the bannermen deteriorated both physically and morally when far removed from their homes. In time they were reduced to impotent groups of privileged men, living on the labour of others and unable to earn their keep. This eventuality was one which K'ang Hsi had himself anticipated and as long as he remained on the throne Manchu soldiers were never allowed to remain long in one place. After a short period of inactivity in a warm climate, they were recalled to the capital to take part in a vigorous campaign of hunting or military manœuvres.

The prince of Foukien was the first of the rebels to intrigue for a separate peace with the Manchus and others followed his example. Wu San Kuei never submitted but continued to fight with the desperation of despair until he died of the combined effect of a paralytic stroke and extreme old age. Active to the end, he had worn himself out attempting to keep his army together and prevent his allies from deserting him. For a while after his death the war dragged on under the command of his grandson, but the end was already in sight. The Manchus had acquired superior ammunition and they had far greater resources. In the year 1681, when their last stronghold was taken by assault, the grandson of Wu San Kuei committed suicide and the rebels capitulated.

Although the Manchus had dealt leniently with the other rebels, it was considered necessary to make an example of the family of Wu San Kuei. His remaining children and grandchildren were put to death, his own body was exhumed and his ashes scattered to the four winds of heaven ; a posthumous indignity which the Chinese considered to be a terrible form of punishment. By this act the prophecy of a Taoist priest was fulfilled, who had warned Wu San Kuei before the rebellion that while he would found a dynasty and call himself emperor, his children would perish and no one bearing his name would be left alive to burn incense before his ancestral shrine.

But as it happened, despite the predictions of the sooth-sayer, incense of another kind was burned to the memory of Wu San Kuei by the Chinese people, who thought him a great patriot and recalled his deeds in songs and legends for generations after his death.

IX

THE JESUITS AS MUNITION-MAKERS

Lack of adequate artillery had greatly hampered the Manchus at the beginning of the rebellion. What cannon existed had been manufactured before the invasion of China and were far too antiquated to be of service. Although three hundred old fieldpieces were eventually thought worthy of repair and sent to Peking for that purpose, it was feared by the authorities in charge of the work that nothing could be done with them. When the emperor heard of the difficulty he summoned Father Verbiest to the palace and asked him to undertake the task of restoring the cannon.

The request, which amounted to a royal command, placed the Jesuit in an awkward position. It was not the moment to refuse because the state was in danger. The least hesitation on his part would have been interpreted as sympathy for the enemy, while a definite refusal would have meant the end of the activity of the Society of Jesus in China and possibly the massacre of those members of the Order found working in the south. Verbiest was obliged to consider all these aspects of the situation before he gave his reply.

On the other hand his own personal reputation with his superiors was at stake. He knew only too well that for a man of peace his contemplated action would be misunderstood in Europe and cause him great and lasting embarrassment. The choice was a serious one when his future career was taken into consideration, but Verbiest did not hesitate. This man, who refused to read his post when it arrived from Europe because it distracted his mind from his work, was not deterred from his duty by any thought of self. Believing it to be for the good of his Order, he accepted the unwelcome task.

The condition of the cannon proved to be better than had been expected. Verbiest had many helpers and the first enemy to be conquered was rust. Some of the cannon had to be abandoned as unfit for use, but more than half could be repaired. Among these only one proved to be defective when they were dragged to the mountains to be tried out. The test was so satisfactory that when it had been made

Verbiest found himself surrounded by smiling faces and was warmly congratulated by the president of the tribunal of war.

"The emperor accepts all these cannon as if they were new," said the president. "You alone will receive the credit because formerly they were believed to be derelict."

Now that the old cannon were repaired the question arose of transporting them to the troops. This would prove far more difficult than restoring them to usefulness because they were large and clumsy and would have to be dragged over roads only suitable for men on horseback. The emperor, who believed that Father Verbiest could do anything required of him, once more placed him in charge of the work.

Verbiest considered that the project was impossible of execution. He feared not only for the cannon, but for his own standing with the emperor should he fail. Only a welcome suggestion on his part could save the situation as again it was impossible for him to refuse.

"Would it not be better," he suggested, "to manufacture cannon of a more suitable size for transportation?"

He had a model ready having anticipated the next request of K'ang Hsi. When tests were made, the small cannon designed by Verbiest proved so satisfactory that twenty more were immediately ordered and the Jesuit found himself obliged to neglect his other duties while he constructed workshops and a forge near his college so that he would always be at hand to supervise the work.

More and more cannon were ordered during the following year, some smaller and some larger than his first model. His success attracted the jealousy of the court eunuchs who felt they were being deprived of the usual "squeeze". Attempts to hinder him were made by stealing metal from the workshops or holding it up during transportation; in a thousand petty ways obstacles were placed in his path because he had no sympathy with the time-honoured system of bribes. But despite the intrigues of the eunuchs the work went on to the great gratification of the emperor who insisted on testing the new cannon himself. One was charged with powder and shot by his own hand and when the ball hit the distant target he publicly congratulated Verbiest. Altogether the Jesuit constructed more than three hundred new fieldpieces, eight of which were ornamented with

dragons and reserved for the emperor's use. In later years, when he went hunting in Tartary, he took them with him and fired them off in the hills to impress the nomads with his superior artillery.

When the cannon were finally ready to be sent to the army and drawn up in a shining row, Father Verbiest pronounced a formal benediction and blessed them. The ceremony took place in an open field where Verbiest had improvised an altar on which he placed a crucifix. Dressed in his priest's vestments, he sprinkled holy water over each individual piece. He had been requested to engrave his own name on each one, but as he said he was working only for the glory of God, he gave to each cannon the name of a saint. This strange ceremony, which seems without precedent in Christian annals, may have been another compromise on the part of the Jesuits, as it was an old Chinese custom to anoint newly made war drums with the blood of a sacrificial animal. The Yen Shih-Ku says :

"Anciently people when they had newly completed a bell or a three-legged cauldron had to anoint it with blood."

Holy water may have been Verbiest's substitute for the time-honoured custom.

Proud and authoritative as K'ang Hsi undoubtedly was, he could on occasions express his gratitude and appreciation. Verbiest had served him well. He wished to show his pleasure in a way that would benefit him. Unlike his father Shun-chih, who had spent many days at the home of the Jesuits, K'ang Hsi had never seen their college. Now he decided that the time had come to pay them a visit. Such a gesture of good will would be known throughout the empire, increasing their prestige in the capital and in the distant provinces.

When the visit took place it lasted for more than two hours. Everything he saw was new and strange to him. He insisted on going all over the church and the garden and then inspected every corner of the house. Next he went to the forge and workshops where the cannon had been made and listened with attention to a long explanation regarding their manufacture. As a parting sign of friendship he wrote with his own hand four characters in beautiful Chinese script which when translated read "Honour God". Beneath these he affixed the mark of the Imperial Jade Seal, the same seal

which had been brought back from a nomad's tent in the desert to the royal palace at Peking. This inscription was later painted on the front of the Jesuit's church, where it remained as a memorial to the emperor's visit.

But as Father Verbiest had foreseen, his work as a maker of munitions brought him much criticism in Europe, where it was freely said that such activity was unsuitable for a man who had devoted his life to God. His critics failed to realize that his success in the service of the emperor gave him so much prestige among the Manchus that his name was sufficient to protect every member of his Order in China. There were no martyred missionaries, no persecutions of the Christians either foreign or Chinese during the years that Verbiest remained at court. Even personal friendship with the rebel princes was not held against the Jesuits, for a letter from Father Verbiest to the general or mandarin in command of a city or a province was sufficient to turn suspicion into respect and persecution into consideration. Many of these high officials were known to him personally; he made it a point to visit them when they came to Peking and to recommend to their protection the Fathers working in their territory.

And yet, casting cannon for the emperor which at the time appeared so advantageous for the Society of Jesus, may have led to the downfall of the Jesuit dream of conquering the Chinese empire for the Roman Catholic Church. In Europe, criticism of Father Verbiest grew in intensity until it was extended to all the Jesuits in China and steps were taken to curtail their activities. Although many fruitful years remained before them, they no longer received unqualified support from the authorities at Rome. Other orders, like the Franciscans, encouraged by the general dissatisfaction against the Jesuits, sent their own missionaries to the Far East in ever increasing numbers. At a time when it would have been advantageous for all Roman Catholics to work together, criticism, jealousy, and eventual competition of one against the other nullified the splendid work of the early Jesuits at the court.

K'ang Hsi emerged from the civil war in a stronger position than when he had entered it. He was now a mature man, the father of sons, and his subjects had had an opportunity to observe him and judge his worth. Whether

on horseback at the head of his troops or in his own apartments at the Forbidden City, he had directed every important movement of the different campaigns. Reports from all over the country, numbering sometimes four hundred a day, had been sent to him for his consideration. He had succeeded in his original intention, which was to waste neither men nor money, and even the cost of the war had not necessitated the burden of heavier taxation. The enemy had worn himself out and with true Oriental patience K'ang Hsi had been content to wait for the inevitable result.

It was his great good fortune that the northern provinces had not been invaded. As the revolt had been confined to the south his own base of supplies and lines of communication had never been threatened. His Chinese troops had done most of the fighting and he had been able to save his Manchus for dealing decisive blows. The emperor had gained much valuable knowledge from seven years of continuous warfare ; knowledge which in the future was to bear fruit.

Never again would he allow distant provinces to be governed by semi-independent princes. This practice was abolished and the wealth and possessions of the defeated rebels were divided among his victorious soldiers. Mandarins who were appointed to govern the provinces were required as part of their duties to make the journey to the capital every year and make their report in person to the emperor. In this way K'ang Hsi kept in touch with all his important officials who were obliged to consult with him on all questions of policy.

Although the campaign was now over on land there remained another and very powerful enemy to be dealt with on the sea. The cities and towns along the coast had been many times ravaged by pirates and no permanent peace was possible while such conditions prevailed. The pirates, who had come to the aid of the prince of Foukien during the rebellion, had retreated to their base at Formosa. Although the Manchus were no sailors and feared the sea, the emperor decided that a fleet of war junks must be built and the conquest of Formosa undertaken. The argument which convinced him that no other course was possible was advanced by a high official.

“ If the island is not taken,” said the minister, “ it will fall a prey to the Dutch.”

So it came about that, for the first time in history, the ambitions of a Western Power influenced the policy of an emperor of China on the subject of peace and war. Formosa, the “ beautiful isle ”, had become an object of international importance as East and West cast covetous eyes on this stronghold of pirates, strategically situated near the coast of China and desired by the Dutch as a base for their trade with Japan.

PART III

CONTACT WITH FOREIGN COUNTRIES

I

PIRATES

THE most famous of the pirates who raided the coast of China during the seventeenth century was an adventurer by the name of Koxinga. His father, Cheng Chih-lung, had acquired a start in life by stealing the cargo of his employer, a Japanese merchant who trusted him, and selling it in Canton for his own profit. Then he bought for himself a fleet of junks and manned them with a formidable band of ruffians. When he sailed away it was with the intention of taking toll from all the merchant ships that came within his reach. During the years that followed his power grew with success, until the captains of trading vessels learned to fear the sound of his name.

Cheng Chih-lung lived at the time when the last emperor of the Ming dynasty ruled over China. This unfortunate monarch had no fleet to send against the pirates and no opportunity to build one. Civil war threatened his throne and the Manchus were massed on his northern frontier. To pacify the pirates before he turned his attention to other enemies, he thought to bribe their chief with honours. Cheng Chih-lung, although he remained a pirate and actively practised his profession, was given the rank of admiral. His son, Koxinga, having the status of the son of an admiral, was sent to Peking to complete his education.

This was the beginning of the career of Koxinga, a clever youth who acquired his strange name in an unusual way. When he sat for the competitive examinations, which gained for the successful candidate an official appointment, he acquitted himself so well that he attracted the emperor's attention. Because of his scholastic ability he received permission to call himself by the emperor's own name. His long title of "Possessor of the National Surname", was eventually shortened and corrupted by the Portuguese to that of Koxinga.

Cheng Chih-lung, the father of the young man, cherished great ambitions for his brilliant son. He had achieved wealth and power by his own efforts and he could see no reason why he should not now aspire to greater things and dispute

the throne with the tottering Ming emperor. The Ming dynasty fell before the pirate had an opportunity to make the attempt, but when the ill-fated dynasty of the southern Mings established its court first at Nanking and later at Foukien, he offered the southern Ming emperor his assistance and the support of the pirates in an attack on Peking, on condition that his own son, the youth Koxinga, be appointed heir-apparent to the throne. The Mings would not listen to such a proposition as this and the offer was refused. Instead of being discouraged by the rebuff Cheng Chih-lung hastened to change sides and offered his allegiance to the Manchus.

Shun-chih, the first of the Manchu emperors, shared with his Mongol friends and allies an age-long distrust of traitors. Moreover, he had no sympathy for pirates and saw no reason to make an exception of one who had been appointed admiral of a non-existent fleet under the former dynasty. But the Manchus had come to China only recently and the emperor felt it would be unwise to embark upon a naval adventure of dubious outcome. It seemed preferable to try strategy and invite the pirate to come to Peking.

Cheng Chih-lung was flattered by the invitation. Believing that it preceded a treaty of alliance between himself and the powerful Manchus, he travelled with all speed to Peking, leaving his junks and his followers in the care of his son Koxinga. To his great surprise he found himself under arrest when he arrived at the capital. Shun-chih had made a bold move but he had neglected to trap the son of his prisoner, and he soon discovered that Koxinga was even less amenable to reason than his father. The son, when he heard of his father's arrest, made his way with the junks to the Pescadore Islands in the Straits of Formosa, which he made his base while preparing for active warfare against the Manchus. The Tartars were now his greatest enemies and in comparison his feelings were kindly towards the remaining Mings.

A few years later, when the Mings had been completely routed and the city of Canton occupied by Manchu soldiers, Koxinga had his junks waiting a short distance from the shore, ready to rescue any refugees who had supported the fallen dynasty. It was an ingenious method of recruiting his own forces and at the same time it proclaimed

him a patriot who was ready at all times to assist the victims of Manchu aggression. Whenever a revolt broke out against the Manchus, irrespective of the nature of the grievance, Koxinga and his followers could be relied upon to give assistance to those fighting against the Tartars.

The Manchus were at the mercy of Koxinga because, like the Mings before them, they had no fleet. They could not even stop the pirate from obtaining supplies from the cities on the coast. He and his men were popular with the inhabitants of the southern provinces, who had remained loyal to the former dynasty, and only submitted to the Manchus when no leader remained alive to follow. Aided by the peasants, the pirates from time to time occupied a town on the mainland, while from the mouth of the Yangtze to the island of Macao their fleet interfered with all shipping.

During the minority of the emperor K'ang Hsi, when conditions became really serious, a decree was issued by the regents ordering all the people living near the sea to move thirty *li* inland, so as to sever communications between them and the pirates. This order brought incredible hardship to the population. All the inhabitants were driven from their homes and were obliged to seek the reluctant charity of their more fortunately situated neighbours. The roads leading to the coast were guarded by soldiers for seven years and the land allowed to lie fallow. The order was only abrogated when K'ang Hsi attained his majority and the futility of the measure was brought to his attention.

Koxinga made his supreme effort in the year 1659, when he attempted to capture the city of Nanking. He might have succeeded had not his men, tired of discipline, celebrated the birthday of their leader with more enthusiasm than discretion. On the third night of a prolonged feast, when all were incapacitated by continuous drinking, the Manchus fell upon them and killed three thousand men. The survivors escaped to their junks leaving their camp and provisions to the conquerors. It was a crushing blow to the imperial aspirations of Koxinga, who could ill afford such a loss at this time.

Besides clearing the coast of its inhabitants, the regents now annulled many of the more lenient measures of the former emperor Shun-chih. Among their victims was the

pirate Cheng Chih-lung, the father of Koxinga, who was taken from his prison and executed. This action, although justified, was not a wise one because Koxinga was given an additional motive for pursuing his policy of revenge against the Manchus. As he could not establish himself on the coast of China he looked about for another world to conquer, preferably one which was also coveted by his enemies. He did not have far to seek. Close at hand lay Formosa, described by early European travellers as "a jewel of an island in a southern sea". Koxinga was not deterred by the fact that the island was already inhabited, for it belonged at this time to the Dutch.

In the tangled web of Chinese political history, the name of Koxinga would have remained that of an unimportant leader of pirates had it not been for his conquest of Formosa. His siege of the Dutch forts had far-reaching results, because it brought him into conflict with a great power of the West and deflected the tide of Dutch immigration from the coast of China to Java and Sumatra. By reason of this conquest, Koxinga became a person to be reckoned with, not only by the Manchus who looked upon the seizure of the island with apprehension, but also by the Dutch, whose prestige in the Orient suffered a severe blow.

The Dutch were not the first Europeans to settle on the island of Formosa. The Spaniards had been there before them, but only in small numbers and they had been driven out. The Dutch, known in the Far East as the red-headed barbarians, were hoping to expand their empire at the expense of China. They had previously made an attempt to take the island of Macao from the Portuguese, who used it as a base for their trade with the Orient and also as the centre of the activities of the Roman Catholic missions. Not being successful in their attempt to dislodge their adversaries from Macao, the Dutch profited by an accident which drove one of their vessels upon the coast of Formosa.

The Dutch vessel landed in the midst of a Japanese fleet, which, it seems, had taken possession of the island. The Japanese wished to found a colony. So did the Dutch. It was not so much the natural beauty of the island which appealed to the practical Hollanders as its strategic position, situated as it was on the trade route between their own colonies and Japan. They begged the Japanese commander

to allow them to build a house near the entrance of the port. They needed a base, so they said, where their sailors could obtain food and water.

When the Japanese demurred the Dutch insisted, protesting that all the land they required could be covered by the hide of an ox. This seemed such a reasonable request that it was granted, but the Japanese soon saw they had been tricked. The wily Hollanders cut a great hide into narrow strips and laid the strips end to end to measure the ground they desired. The land marked out in this way became the site of Fort Zelandia and the spot chosen commanded the approach by sea and controlled the only port by which large vessels could enter. The Japanese appear to have been more amused than angry ; eventually they sailed away and left the island in the possession of the Dutch.

In time the Dutch constructed other forts and also a three-storied, strongly fortified house on the opposite side of the harbour to Fort Zelandia. From these central strongholds they spread out in every direction and, with the help of the aborigines, started to cultivate the soil which yielded sufficient crops to maintain themselves and their families. Under its new rulers the island, previously inhabited by savages, changed in character and became, like all Dutch settlements, orderly and neat. There was little fear of attack and the small force of soldiers which had been sent out to defend it was finally dismissed as unnecessary. Schools and churches were built and Protestant missionaries followed in the wake of the colonists to educate the children and be the spiritual guides of the people.

Formosa seemed a pleasant place to the Hollanders. It had been named the "Beautiful Isle" by the Portuguese when they saw it for the first time, because of its high mountains, rushing streams of clear water, and lovely wooded hillsides. Besides its natural beauty, it was rich in coal and sulphur mines, while in the lowlands rice could be grown as well as corn and different kinds of fruits. In the mountains lived the aborigines, who ate raw flesh and never spared anyone who fell into their hands, but who, when captured, could be forced to work as slaves. The lowlands attracted many Chinese settlers from the mainland. They came in increasing numbers until the Dutch were in the minority. The latter were not particularly clever in their

handling of the Chinese immigrants and when Koxinga, the pirate, contemplated the conquest of the island, he began his campaign by stirring up dissatisfaction among the Chinese.

Trade and religion were the two greatest preoccupations of the Dutch colonists. The two went hand in hand in the Far East, because it seemed to them a worthy act, pleasing in the sight of God, to divert the profits of the Portuguese Catholics into their own good Protestant hands. When the pirates came to buy rice and other products of the island, they were not rebuffed but allowed to come and go. Under the cover of trade they fraternized with the Chinese inhabitants and every opportunity was utilized to instill certain ideas into their minds. Why submit to these Western barbarians, asked the pirates? They were but a handful and their only support were ships which came at irregular intervals from a great distance. Their destruction would never be avenged and how pleasant it would be for everyone else concerned to have them out of the way. Simple minds pondered long over these suggestions, which seemed quite logical, and there were many to welcome Koxinga when he arrived off the island with a hundred ships and twenty-five thousand men.

All went well for Koxinga, because the Dutch were unprepared. He took several towns and was able to isolate the forts and conquer them one by one. Fort Zelandia proved too strong to be taken by assault so his progress was halted for six months while he effected a blockade. At the end of that time he was able to cut off the water supply and the fort fell into his hands.

The governor of the island had done all he could to resist the invasion, but he was not supported by his countrymen in Batavia, who believed the danger exaggerated. When reinforcements finally arrived they proved inadequate to turn the tide of battle. There was little that could be done to save the Dutch settlers outside the fort. Many fell into the hands of the pirates and were cruelly put to death. The women and girls were divided among the fighting men of the enemy. Five hundred Dutch settlers perished but when Fort Zelandia fell, the gallant defenders were allowed to depart with their property in their own ships. Their heroic resistance had won the respect of the enemy.

The pirate Koxinga lived only a short time after his occupation of Formosa, but during that period he built towns and organized a government with the help of two able Chinese assistants. He encouraged former supporters of the Ming dynasty to escape from Manchu rule and take refuge with him where there was work for all and food was plentiful. Koxinga called himself the king of Formosa and when he died the title descended to his son Cheng Kin.

Koxinga might have been willing to remain on the island far removed from the watchful eye of the Manchu emperor, but his son was not content to do so. Fighting was in his blood and when the uprising against the Manchus broke out in the southern provinces, he offered his services to the prince of Foukien, the ally of Wu San Kuei. This brought him to the attention of K'ang Hsi who decided that a rival king so near to his own empire was not at all to his taste. Neither did he want the Dutch to retake the island and fortify it. The emperor determined that as soon as the civil war was over he would turn his attention to the subjugation of the pirates.

Before he embarked on costly naval warfare, K'ang Hsi determined to make a last attempt to conciliate the pirate king and turn him into a vassal. Cheng Kin was offered his independence on the following terms :—

“Since this naval war began, the court has sent repeated instructions to conciliate you, but the negotiations have always fallen through. Formosa is not part of China proper ; your father and yourself have introduced civilization and have moreover shown an affection for the late dynasty. And why should our dynasty grudge you this speck beyond the seas. The three satrapies are now annihilated and we are at peace with the world. A wise man knows his opportunities and will hardly blow once more the dying embers into flames to the ruin of the wretched people. If you are willing to keep to your domains and cease hostilities, then from this time you will not set foot on these shores, nor need you shave your pate or don our garments. If you like to send tribute as a vassal you can ; if not, never mind. It is for you to consider this.”(1)

Despite this conciliatory communication, negotiations fell through and in 1683 K'ang Hsi determined to attack Formosa. Five hundred junks were built and manned by fourteen thousand men, some of whom had been persuaded to desert the pirates and fight for the Manchus.

Strongly entrenched as were the pirates on Formosa, they could not hold out against the emperor's troops and soon the Tartars occupied the island and proclaimed it a Chinese province.

K'ang Hsi was well satisfied with the result. When the pirate king was sent to Peking a prisoner, he was not executed as his grandfather had been, but instead was treated with every honour and granted the title of duke. After all, his family had performed a great service for the Manchus by driving the Dutch from Formosa. The Hollanders would have been a much more formidable enemy for the emperor to face and, moreover, he preferred to live on terms of friendship with the European powers whose strength he was learning to respect through his studies with the Jesuits. So Cheng Kin was declared a supporter of the former Ming dynasty and therefore a patriot instead of an outlaw.

The past was quickly forgotten. A few years later, when a memorial was presented to the throne requesting permission to build a temple to the memory of the notorious pirate Koxinga, the emperor graciously gave his consent.

II

TRAVELS IN TARTARY

When the civil war was over and peace had been proclaimed, the emperor decided that the time had arrived to make a long contemplated journey to the province of Liao-tung. As there seemed to be no obvious reason why he should not leave his capital, he announced his decision to visit the tombs of his ancestors, a destination which would be popular with his Chinese subjects as it demonstrated his devotion to the Confucian cult of filial piety.

He said nothing at all about his real reasons for taking the journey. He was not a man who confided his thoughts to others and those closest to his person were often in doubt as to the motives which induced him to take certain steps. No one realized that he was concerned about the future of his army nor that he was planning an expedition which would keep his soldiers occupied. Astute statesman that he was, he realized that the power of his dynasty rested not upon numbers but upon the discipline and ability of the individual bannerman. Should the efficiency of the army be allowed to deteriorate, the rule of the Manchus in China would soon come to an end.

The emperor had already planned in his mind a series of long expeditions which would lead him through every part of his wide domain and eventually into the territory of the Mongols, where he could make personal contact with the individual Mongol khans. He had not forgotten the revolt of Satchar, the Mongol prince, at the beginning of the uprising in the south. He knew that it would be wise to bind his distant vassals closer to the throne, and once his Chinese subjects had become accustomed to his prolonged absences, the convenient excuse of filial piety could be abandoned and he would be free to develop his foreign policy in his own way.

Two thousand years ago an emperor of the Ch'in dynasty had built the Great Wall to protect the northern boundary of the empire. K'ang Hsi realized that in an age of cannon and gunpowder the Great Wall was no longer invulnerable, therefore it was his intention to make a strong alliance with

the Mongol tribes living near the border and use them for purposes of defence. His successful enactment of this policy was the most outstanding achievement of his long reign. It justified his own belief, that kind treatment and wise government accomplished more in the long run than ruthless invasion and unnecessary wars.

He was only twenty-nine years of age at this time but his health was another reason for the expedition. The air of Peking did not suit him and he suffered from continual minor ailments if he remained too long at the capital. In the open he was an unusually strong man; physical fatigue was unknown to him and even after long hours in the saddle he needed little rest. His diet was always frugal; on expeditions, if rations were low, he permitted himself no luxuries and shared the food of his men. Cities oppressed his spirits and although he often left his palace for a day's hunting or to stay at one of his country houses near Peking, this change was not sufficient to satisfy his craving for another kind of life. Inherited from his ancestors was a deep longing for the mountains and forests of his native land.

All his objectives could be achieved by organizing a great hunt, or rather a succession of great hunts, while on his journey to the tombs of his ancestors; his soldiers would be kept in training and the Mongol khans living near the border could be invited to join in the hunt in order to see for themselves the size of his army and the magnificence of his retinue. At the same time his own health would doubtless improve, once the confining walls of the Forbidden City had been left behind. Hunts such as the ones he contemplated had been arranged by the great Mongol conqueror Genghis Khan in the thirteenth century as a means of keeping his warriors occupied between battles. K'ang Hsi planned to do the same thing, although in a different way, as the days when a hundred thousand horsemen could gallop off, prepared to live on the country through which they passed, had gone for ever.

Long and careful preparations were necessary before an emperor of China could set forth on a distant expedition with a great number of followers. According to tradition, the emperor should have consulted the astronomers and asked them to name an auspicious day for his departure. He neglected to do so because he refused to take seriously

any longer many of the superstitions believed in by his ancestors and his studies with the Jesuits had taught him to lose faith in auspicious and inauspicious days. When he decided to set forth at the beginning of spring in the year 1682, after the cold of the winter had moderated and the days were beginning to lengthen, he informed his ministers of his intentions. As was to be expected, they hastened to assure him that his judgment was without equal and that all the omens were favourably disposed towards his project.

It was in the cold twilight that precedes the coming of a spring dawn that the emperor, followed by his courtiers, rode through the great central gate of the Forbidden City on his way to the north. He was mounted on a fine white horse saddled with heavy yellow cloth, one of the eight white horses which were sent him every year by the Kalka Mongols as tribute. In his hands were reins of twisted yellow satin—the Manchus did not use leather for this purpose—and his high silk boots were thrust into stirrups of iron washed with gold. Long yellow tassels dangled beneath his horse's neck as was the fashion among the bannermen, who took great care with the trappings of their mounts. Before him was carried a great banner of yellow brocade, on which was embroidered the imperial device of twining dragons, while directly behind him lumbered three heavy chariots of state containing the young empress and two of his secondary wives.

Outside the great gate the army was drawn up on either side of the road, making a lane through which the emperor passed rapidly. Banners waved in the breeze and the silk coats of the nobles reflected the rays of the rising sun as K'ang Hsi galloped through the deserted streets. At his side rode his eldest son, a lad of ten years of age, while princes of the blood, mandarins of high rank, officers, and soldiers followed in military formation, each under his own banner. Altogether the company consisted of more than seventy thousand mounted men.

A tall, majestic figure with a long grey beard rode among the mandarins in the emperor's suite. Although he was dressed exactly like the others, no similarity of costume could conceal the fact that he was a foreigner. It was an unusual event for a European to be included in such a company, but Father Verbiest had been invited to travel

with the court. He was now fifty-nine years old, but he looked younger, his vigour unimpaired by the long years in the emperor's service and his eyes as bright and penetrating as they had been in his youth. K'ang Hsi had insisted on his presence, not only because he wished to honour him for his great services to the Manchus during the rebellion, but also because he wanted him at his side during the journey "to take observations of the dispositions of the heavens, the height of mountains and the distance between places". (1) Whenever he was required to do so, Father Verbiest was prepared to explain such phenomena as meteors and all matters relating to physics and mathematics. Astronomical instruments, of the kind used in Europe before the days of the telescope, were packed away on the backs of horses, with the exception of one which was irreplaceable and which, for greater safety, was carried on the back of a trusted mandarin throughout the entire journey.

A great highway had been constructed by order of the emperor, or rather two parallel roads, which stretched all the way from Peking to Mukden, a distance of eleven hundred miles. One was for the court and the army; the other for pack animals and baggage carts. All the provisions for the journey were carried along, as there was no city north of the Great Wall which would have been able to support such a large company in addition to its own population. Each soldier had three extra horses besides the one he rode and his equipment was carefully weighed and measured according to regulations issued by K'ang Hsi. An experienced soldier himself, he insisted upon conserving the strength of the animals and would never allow them to be overloaded.

Other roads had been built for the return journey to provide a variety of scenery and sport. Father Verbiest, who kept a daily record of his experiences, wrote:—

"The road was about ten feet broad and as straight and even as they could possibly make it. In fine weather it was as clean as a threshing floor, men being appointed for that purpose. They did their best to level mountains and build bridges over torrents." (2)

The sides of the road were lined with mats upon which had been painted brightly coloured animals to give the

effect of tapestries, the subjects of the decorations being those which had predominated in nomad art from the beginning, and which characterized it from the art of the centres of civilization.

During the day the emperor rode at the head of the army and was followed at some distance by his wives and their attendants. Then came the high officials according to their rank. A vast number of servants and miscellaneous followers brought up the rear. Military formation was kept by the troops on the march and no man left his place even when it rained, but instead wrapped himself in a waterproof garment. In the mountains, or when hunting in the forest, if the route became too difficult for the men to remain in the saddle, they dismounted and, leading their horses by the bridle, still preserved their ranks. Flying dust, raised by the feet of camels, pack horses, mules, and cattle added greatly to the discomfort of the travellers, who often had to pass through a thick, grey cloud, which obliterated the road ahead. Through an error of judgment the two highways had been placed too close together for comfort.

A halt was made in the evening by the banks of a river, where there was abundant water. By two o'clock in the morning the camp was stirring once more and at daybreak the tents were folded and packed away to be sent forward in the charge of quartermasters to the next halting place. Everyone knew exactly what there was to be done, so there was never any confusion despite the vast number of men. When the tents for the emperor, his wives and son and their personal attendants were erected, they were surrounded by a heavy net of rope seven feet high which formed an improvised wall. Round this central enclosure were placed two great circles of tents, side by side so as to form additional barriers. In the first circle were soldiers always on guard, while behind them lodged the princes and high officials. The remainder of the company slept beyond the circles of tents, each man in his own place.

All the tents, including that of the emperor, were round in shape and made of white felt in the Mongol fashion. The one used by K'ang Hsi was covered with coarse Chinese stuffs and on the top was an imperial emblem embroidered in gold. The interior was sparsely furnished with a bed and writing desk, but on certain occasions, such as when one

of the Mongol princes visited the camp, rich brocades and fine rugs were hastily produced from chests and all was made ready to impress the nomads. Although he preferred to live simply and surrounded himself on his travels with only the necessities of life, the emperor nevertheless appreciated the value of the appurtenances of a court. As a stage is arranged in the theatre for the different acts of a drama, so could he alter his surroundings at a moment's notice to conform to the impression which he wished to produce on a guest.

He often left the highway to follow the chase, sometimes under the blazing sun or during a heavy rainfall, sparing himself as little as he did his men. When the first three hundred miles of the journey lay behind them and they had entered the province of Liao-tung, he went off for several days at a time to hunt in the forests. Father Verbiest always accompanied him. He had been given ten horses from the imperial stables for his personal use, one of which had been previously ridden by the monarch himself. The Jesuit lodged in the tent of the emperor's uncle, a dignitary of the highest rank, who showed him great kindness and provided him with the cooked rice and cold water which his health demanded in a company of meat-eating, tea-drinking men.

Horsemanship proved on this journey to be a necessary accomplishment for Father Verbiest. For more than three months his life and well-being depended upon his seat in the saddle. It had not been included among the subjects taught during his novitiate, but the intrepid father managed to retain his seat and did not fall on his head, as was the case with some of his successors at the court of the emperor of China. On this journey he rode over two thousand miles with no ill-effects beyond a constant and devastating fatigue which possibly shortened his life. Often he would reach the tent of the emperor's uncle several hours after dark too tired to stand.

"I would sometimes have foreborn to follow the hunt," he wrote afterwards in a letter to Europe, "but for the advice of friends and for fear that the emperor might take it ill if he missed me." (3)

His uncomplaining acceptance of physical fatigue increased the respect which the emperor and his officials



THE CAMP OF K'ANG HSI AS SEEN BY A CONTEMPORARY EUROPEAN VISITOR

had for him. In the same spirit with which he had cast cannon during the rebellion, he now remained in the saddle for twelve hours on end without food, except for the wild fruits and berries which he found for himself in the forest. He realized that he had been given a unique opportunity to extend his field of influence, because his presence had become necessary to the emperor who never lost his enthusiasm for Western science, and who always wanted someone near at hand to explain to him those things which he did not completely understand.

In the evening, after the hunt, the emperor was often obliged to sit late at his desk, answering dispatches brought by courier from Peking. Had he no important business to transact it was his pleasure to sit out of doors in the company of the Jesuit and study the stars. The presence of the empress and the other ladies, as far as K'ang Hsi was concerned, was superfluous; he never took any of his wives on a long journey with him again, but Father Verbiest and later one or more of his successors were invariably included in the company when K'ang Hsi turned his back on the Forbidden City and rode away on his travels. Sick or well, no complaints were ever heard from the Jesuits as they tired themselves out and eventually died in his service. The emperor, who appreciated their endurance, was once heard to say that Europeans had a great deal of courage and were made for labour and fatigue.

The country through which the expedition passed as they approached the city of Mukden was dreary in the extreme. It had been largely depopulated when the Manchus moved their capital to Peking and the soldiers had followed their emperor with their families. In former times the province had known many invasions. Ruins of once prosperous cities remained as mute evidence of the fierce warfare of long ago. Here and there a few miserable huts had been erected within the enclosure of crumbling ancient walls, signs of human habitation which only served to emphasize the desolation of the landscape where few fields were cultivated and the isolated inhabitants lacked even the necessities of life.

Sometimes one of the peasants would show his devotion to the emperor by bringing him a wild boar shot in the forest, or even a couple of small black loaves baked by his

wife. One wretched old man offered to lead his horse, having nothing left to give but personal service. Many were frightened and would not believe that the great emperor had come among them, but thought him to be an invader who would rob them of the little they had. K'ang Hsi talked with them himself, quieting their fears as he questioned them regarding their means of livelihood, what taxes they had to pay, and what they thought of the mandarins who ruled them in his name. Information received in this way was put in writing and used at a later date to improve the condition of the people. Through wise government and kindly measures he endeavoured to live up to the old Chinese saying which asserts that an emperor must be the father and mother of his people.

III

A MANCHU HUNT

When hunting in the forests the Manchus reverted to the ways of their ancestors, trapping and killing animals as the nomads had done since the beginning of history. Wherever the people of the steppes penetrated, or whatever country they invaded the same methods of hunting prevailed. Sometimes the game was followed on foot, more often on horseback, but always a circle was formed which surrounded the wild beasts and caught them as if in a net. Disturbed in their lairs by the tramping of hoofs and the shouts of the hunters, the terrified creatures fled forward, only to be confronted at one point or another by an unyielding barrier of horses and men.

To form the circle the emperor, armed with a quiver, bow, and arrows and attended by his courtiers, set up his standard in the centre of a forest or on the top of a wooded slope. Then, at a given signal, two horsemen galloped off, one to the right and the other to the left until they reached a spot some two miles distant from each other. Once there they remained stationary, while between them several thousand horsemen took up their positions, facing each other but at a great distance apart, forming a huge circle many miles in circumference. Nobles and officers were scattered among the soldiers to maintain discipline and see that the ranks were not broken, because to leave a gap was a crime, punishable at times even by death.

Although when the circle was formed each horseman was at a distance from his neighbour, as they moved forward step by step it grew smaller until the horses were side by side, forming a solid mass of quivering, terrified animals, alarmed by the nearness of wild beasts. Then the horsemen dismounted, each one holding his mount by the bridle and waited with spear in hand for the attack which was certain to come. The emperor shot from the centre of the ring while the soldiers killed the frenzied animals as they attempted to break through the human wall. Foxes, wolves, hares, bears, boars, stags, and even tigers were caught in the net, but when tigers were discovered the circle was abandoned.

With thousands of men crowded together in the underbrush, the emperor considered that the sport had become too dangerous.

After sufficient animals had been killed to feed the army, the young son of the emperor went to his father and begged that the lives of the remaining beasts might be spared. This was the signal that the hunt had come to an end. Camels were laden with the carcasses and driven before the emperor, who divided the spoils, giving to each man his share. On special occasions, when K'ang Hsi wished to honour a particular person, he took his own knife and, cutting for himself a haunch of venison, instructed the favourite of the day to follow his example. Faggots of wood were collected, spits appeared as if by magic, and great fires were lighted to roast the meat.

Squatting on their heels, the elders of the company held their venison to the fire for a minute or two, then ate it with relish while still dripping with blood. Their sons born in China and brought up in a different environment, laughed and refused to follow their fathers' example, roasting their own portions until they were properly cooked. Already these sons of the Manchu conquerors had assimilated some of the habits of the Chinese people but they remained sufficiently hardy to ignore the vagaries of the weather. In the hardest downpour the emperor would cut and prepare his meat as leisurely as if the sun was shining. Round the bonfires the improvised feast continued until night had fallen and the emperor ordered the return to camp. At his signal, horsemen leaped into their saddles and the silence of the forest was broken by the noise of invisible hoofs as a phantom army thundered past without flares or torches, guided instead by an instinctive sense of direction which the Manchus had inherited from generations of nomad ancestors.

Sometimes hunts took place by moonlight when the entire court, including the emperor, followed the game on foot. When the moon set, flares were lighted so that the sport could be continued until dawn. Once the hunters came upon a flock of wild sheep and found among them two solitary wolves, living in apparent friendship with the old rams and feeding off the lambs at their leisure. During the mating season stags were hunted with the assistance of a decoy.

The head and antlers of a dead animal were hidden in the long grass and the call of the stag to his mate was imitated by concealed hunters to attract the attention of the stags and draw them within bowshot. Employing different methods and always varying the sport, the emperor taught his men to trap wild beasts with the same discipline and efficiency as if they were engaged in actual warfare.

Sometimes fresh fruit was brought to K'ang Hsi, packed in snow from the distant mountains. To provide hot water for his tea, a brazier was filled with live coals and swung between two horses. Serving him on these occasions were the young sons of his nobles, whom he kept near him engaged in various capacities. One made his arrows, another looked after his dogs or tended his hawks, while a third prepared his tea. This was one of the methods by which the astute emperor chose his future officials. By watching the young men at their simple tasks he had the opportunity to judge their capacity for more important work. The brightest of these boys were selected to be mandarins and eventually ruled far distant provinces in his name.

At the noon hour K'ang Hsi allowed himself a short rest and commanded a bed to be made for him on the ground. The army and the courtiers too were able to enjoy a well-earned rest, and while the emperor slept in the warmth of the spring sunshine his attendants dozed with their eyes open, always alert for his slightest move. During this interval Father Verbiest sometimes amused himself by searching for wild berries and certain kinds of large mushrooms which he had discovered were good to eat. Often he observed the marks of forest fires ; as men seldom passed that way he concluded they must have been caused by stags rubbing their horns against dry wood until the friction produced a spark.

He was much interested in the wild life of the forest. Although he carried no arms and only followed the hunt as an observer, he once, to the amusement of his companions, caught a wild stag between his knees. Only a brave man would have ridden in the midst of the slaughter with no means to defend himself from attack, but if the Jesuit felt fear he did not show it. Occasionally he dismounted to examine the carcass of an unusually large bear or some other victim of the hunt which had caught his attention, but for

the most part he remained near, although always aloof, engrossed in the spectacle that took place before his wondering eyes.

At Mukden the army rested for several days while the emperor, accompanied by his wives, performed his devotions at the tombs of his ancestors. Afterwards the ladies were left behind while K'ang Hsi moved on to the north. The new road had come to an end and there was no longer a possibility of dragging the unwieldy chariots through the rough paths of the forests. Such roads as there were had been made by generations of hunters, who came every year in search of the sable. They risked their lives through the long cold winters in order to return to their homes in the spring with a bundle of the coveted pelts. The emperor was familiar with the habits of these hunters, because the finest skins were sent to him as tribute, while the remainder fetched high prices from local mandarins or from traders, who in turn sold them in different parts of the empire.

A trap was seldom used in hunting the sable because there was always danger of injuring the delicate fur. Instead, the hunter had a little dog as his companion and a net as his only weapon. When he found the tracks in the snow, he followed them on foot, sometimes for two or three days until the sable took refuge up a tree. Then the net was spread beneath the branches, a fire was built close at hand, and the trapper waited until his quarry was smoked out and ran down into the net. During the long chase, when the hunter would be forced to go several days without food, he would strap thin wooden boards to the front and back of his body with cords. These he would draw tighter together as time passed and in this way was spared the worst pangs of hunger. As there was constant demand for the precious pelts, the hunters were willing to chance hunger, cold, and the possibility of a terrible death, the risks of a profession which could, when conditions were favourable, earn for them a considerable sum of money.

Another and even stranger form of hunting went on every year in this distant northern land. In the dense forests grew the famous plant called *gensing*, which was used for medicinal purposes. According to an ancient prescription, *gensing* "fortifies the noble parts, fixes the animal spirits, cures the palpitations occasioned by sudden frights,

dispels malignant vapours, and strengthens the judgment. When it is taken for a considerable time together, it makes the body light and active and prolongs life". (1) The Mongols used the leaves to brew a drink which they preferred to tea, finding it more strengthening and more to their taste.

With all these extraordinary properties, *gensing* was so precious and so costly that the emperor wished to give his Manchus the benefit of this lucrative trade. One of the results of his trip was the organization of a small army of ten thousand men, who were sent every summer into the woods to gather the precious plant. *Gensing* was found only on the sides of mountains or on the banks of steep ravines, as if nature, wishing to protect her choicest plant, had sown its seeds in places most inaccessible to man.

It was a wild country through which the emperor and his soldiers passed, where even in summer it was very cold at night in the valleys of the high mountains. Horses died from exposure and men shivered under their blankets and furs. Their destination was Karin, a small city on the banks of the Segalien River, which formed at this point the boundary between the lands of the Manchus and those of the Russians or Muscovites, as they were called. At the outskirts of the city K'ang Hsi dismounted from his horse and allowed himself to be carried through the streets on a golden throne. Tears of joy were shed by the people at his approach; the emperor touched by their devotion, ordered his soldiers to allow them to draw near and not drive them back, as would have been the case in a Chinese city.

Hundreds of years ago the original Manchus had pitched their tents in the basin of the Segalien and here, in this isolated spot, the emperor felt he had really come home. He looked at the remains of a fort which had once belonged to the Russians and heard from the lips of the peasants how the fierce Cossacks, lawless and free in this distant part of their empire, had descended upon the town to rob the pearl fisheries. The question of the boundary between the two countries was one that had caused trouble for many years past, therefore the emperor felt that this dispute had to be settled once and for all after his return to Peking.

He spent two days among these people and then went

down the river with some of his mandarins in a small boat as far as Ula, a city which had been the first capital of his ancestors. He had intended to spend several days fishing, but for the first time the good fortune which had so far accompanied the expedition deserted him. Rain fell in torrents for a week. No fishing was possible and when the emperor turned back towards Karin the aspect of the countryside had changed. Rivers and streams were swollen to dangerous proportions, pools and bogs had taken the place of dry land. After leaving Karin on the return trip, there was no improvement in conditions. Camels and pack horses floundered and died in quagmires of mud. Provisions gave out as the tired and hungry men tramped doggedly forward, pulling their unwilling horses after them. Those in the rear fared worst of all, because when the emperor had passed with his soldiers the road over which he travelled became impassable. Princes were reduced to the level of misery of the poorest camp follower as they dragged themselves through the marshes, anxious not to be abandoned and left behind.

When bridges were reached the emperor crossed first and everyone else crowded after him, each man eager to be the first to pass. Many were thrown into the water while others stuck fast in the mud before reaching the bridge and were unable to extricate themselves.

"I cannot express the fatigue of the journey," wrote Father Verbiest in his journal one night after reaching camp. "The roads being spoiled and rendered impassable by the waters." (2) Veteran campaigners told him that even in the midst of actual warfare they had never suffered as much as on the return journey from Karin to Peking.

One evening the army reached the banks of a river which, swollen by the rains, had become too deep and too swift to ford. On the far side could be seen the tents and provisions which had been sent forward by a different route earlier in the day. Only one small boat was available and in this the emperor and his son were the first to cross the river. Night was falling as the impatient men waited in the growing darkness for the return of the boat, which at best could only transport four more persons. Straining eyes at last discovered it drawing towards them through the dusk and as it approached the shore they saw to their great

surprise that the emperor was still seated in it. His voice could be heard above the wind and the lapping of the water calling loudly for Father Verbiest. The emperor's uncle responded, pushing the Jesuit towards the spot where the boat was about to land.

"Let him come with us," shouted the emperor to his uncle. "We three shall cross together."

When the boat reached the opposite shore for the second time night had fallen and no more trips could be made in the darkness. Irrespective of rank all the members of the company were obliged to sleep on the ground without provisions, blankets, or tents. But thanks to the kindness of the emperor, Father Verbiest was under shelter. When he had eaten, the emperor again called for him and, seating himself on the bank of the river with the Jesuit at his side, he asked for a treasured astronomical instrument. Long into the night the two men sat together, talking quietly as they studied the stars which seemed to shine larger and brighter here in the far north than over the palace at Peking.

"The emperor was pleased," recorded Father Verbiest, "that I should name the constellations that then appeared above the horizon in the Chinese and European languages, himself naming those he knew. Then opening a little map which I had presented to him some years before, he sought the hour of the night by the stars of the meridian." (3)

Possibly the emperor, tired of being constantly surrounded by courtiers, would have been content if his army had always remained one stage behind him, leaving him free in the evening to enjoy himself in his own way. Certainly during the entire journey he showed that kindly concern for the welfare of his Jesuit companion which was always a distinguishing quality of his character. The friendship of the emperor and the esteem which he publicly displayed for Father Verbiest did much to compensate the latter for the great hardships of that long and difficult journey. Although many remained behind on the road either sick or disabled, he himself reached Peking none the worse for his adventures in Tartary.

IV

IN PURSUIT OF LEARNING

Although the Manchus had conquered China and had imposed their will upon the Chinese people, they gave them in return a renewed vitality. The Manchus were strong, vigorous men, alert and energetic, with the capacity for activity which is the birthright of a young race. The emperor K'ang Hsi had inherited all these qualities from his ancestors. He brought new life to the task of governing an ancient state and his immense vitality swept all obstacles before it. But the wisdom and patience of the Chinese people among whom he lived had tempered his impetuosity. From his environment and not from his forefathers came his love of learning, the mastery of which he attacked with all the enthusiasm that his ancestors had shown when they hunted the tiger or the wild boar.

During the long journey to the province of Liao-tung it was the emperor who led his men day after day to the chase through tractless forests and eventually back to Peking through rain and quagmires of mud. Once again in the Forbidden City, the energy which drove him forward would not let him rest. With no more rebels to conquer and no more hunts to organize he set himself the task of restoring learning to the position of importance which it had formerly occupied, as well as to revive throughout the country the arts and crafts, which in former centuries had caused the names of certain emperors to be handed down to posterity as the greatest patrons of art of their age.

The scholars of ancient times, such as Confucius, Mencius, and many others, had taught that to govern a country successfully a ruler must cultivate his own mind and purify his heart before attempting to improve the condition of the people. Such maxims were learned by little children during their first years at school and they had sunk deep into the consciousness of K'ang Hsi. He followed the precepts of the great Chinese teachers when, upon his return, he once more resumed his studies. There remained much that he longed to learn from the Jesuits. His curiosity regarding Western knowledge was only half satisfied ; his

restless, inquiring mind still searched for new worlds to conquer.

Plans were maturing in his mind for the future, plans for the benefit of his people which would take years to carry out, and which only a man granted long life could hope to live to accomplish. Not only the Jesuits, but Chinese scholars were gathered together under his roof, sifting and classifying material under his direction in order to prepare the vast number of volumes which were issued during his reign. In common with all Chinese scholars the emperor wrote poetry, some of which has survived until to-day. But he had not the nature of a poet. His love of Western science indicated the mind of an exact, scientific searcher after truth. Combined with his interest in mathematics and astrology was an equal interest in words and phrases. To-day, more than two hundred years after his death, when the greatness of the man is forgotten and the race to which he belonged no longer dominates any part of the world, only his love of words and his interest in the partisans of his country are remembered by reason of the fact that vast, learned dictionaries and huge, multi-coloured porcelain vases bear his name.

His interest in his own native tongue led him to compile reference books during the years of peace that followed the rebellion of Wu San Kuei. It was time that steps were taken to revive the language of the Manchus, which was in danger of being forgotten by the children of the bannermen born in China. While on his journey K'ang Hsi had heard it spoken as the common language of the people. At Peking, on the contrary, it was used less and less. To counteract a state of affairs which he considered undesirable, he created a tribunal whose business it was to translate Chinese classics into Manchu and write a thesaurus of the words and phrases of that language.

A characteristic of the Manchu, or Tartarian language as the Jesuits called it, was the general use of a great number of single words which would be required to do the work of four or five others in another tongue. Dogs and horses, both of the utmost importance to the nomads, were described by numerous attributes. One word, for example, being all that was necessary to indicate that a dog had long hair, long ears, and a long tail. More than a hundred such single

words were used to describe the horse whose colour, age, quality, paces, and reactions to certain events, such as the fall of his rider or when suddenly confronted by a wild beast, were likewise characterized in the same terse manner. On the other hand, there was a poverty of expressions for actions and objects of less vital importance to hunters and trappers. This made translations from other languages into Manchu exceedingly difficult. To increase the vocabulary of his people, the emperor offered a reward to anyone who could remember an old word, or perhaps a phrase which he had learned in his childhood. Many such words had been forgotten or had fallen into disuse.

To complicate matters still further there were four different methods of writing, although there existed only one set of script. The first method, the "honorific", denoted respect, and resembled fine engraving; a second was burdened with less rigid rules in regard to the margin of the paper and the exact thickness of a stroke, a third was a rapid, running hand which was used for general affairs; while the fourth was but a brief record of essential thoughts, details and corrections being inserted afterwards. All four methods were legible backwards as well as forwards and could be read quite as easily upside down. If the work of a scribe could be overlooked from any part of a room, no secrecy was possible as far as the thoughts he was putting on paper were concerned.

The language of the Chinese people with its thousands of complicated characters took longer for a foreigner to learn and presented many pitfalls to the student. A letter written by a European describes its difficulties:—

"In regard to the language of the country," this man wrote in despair, "I can assure you that only for the glory of God would one give oneself the labour of learning it. For five long months I have employed eight hours each day writing lists of words in order to teach myself to read." (1)

A modern authority on the language writes:—

"Chinese characters are monosyllabic and pictographic, they are not made up from an alphabet but stand alone, each ideogram throwing upon the mind an isolated picture. The characters comprise three elements, thought, sound, and form." (2)

The Jesuits were obliged to learn both of these difficult and complicated languages, not only sufficiently well to

speaking them but to write books and teach in both. Manchu must be spoken correctly because it was the emperor's own tongue and he, in common with all his race, thought it the most beautiful language in the world. European writing was regarded with suspicion by both Manchus and Chinese, who considered that the letters formed an illegible chain, resembling nothing more than the marks left by flies walking across a dusty, lacquered table. The eldest son of the emperor remarked to one of the Jesuits :—

“ Our language is strong and majestic and has an agreeable effect upon the ear ; whereas when you are talking in your own language I hear nothing but a perpetual gabbling, not unlike the jargon used in the province of Foukien.” (3)

For greater convenience the Jesuits had been allotted an apartment in the palace where they could work undisturbed during the day. At four o'clock in the morning the emperor sent his own servants and horses to fetch them to court and in the evening they were escorted home in the same way. In summer rising at such an early hour was no great hardship, but in winter when the cold winds swept the streets and the horses' hoofs slipped on the frozen ground it was no sinecure to be obliged to arrive at the palace before dawn.

“ This prince,” wrote one of the emperor's tutors, “ is the declared enemy of a lazy and idle life so he never goes to bed but late and rises early ; from whence it comes about that we were always very careful in being at court early in the morning. It happened frequently that before we could set out of doors, he had already sent for us, either to receive some of his calculations or perhaps a new problem. He finds a real amusement to put in practice what he has learned of geometry and perfects himself in the use of mathematical instruments.” (4)

The emperor usually spent four hours each day in the company of his Jesuit tutors and so interested had he become in their work that, when he went to his summer palace two leagues from Peking, they joined him there every day, leaving the city long before dawn and returning late in the evening and then not to rest, because part of each night was spent in preparing for the next day. The Jesuits themselves were students until they had mastered the two languages required of them ; to please the emperor, who wished to test their knowledge, they were obliged to write

treatises for him on the different subjects which interested him, and which he revised, correcting both expressions and style.

Despite long hours and exacting duties, the Jesuits worked under conditions which would have seemed ideal to the majority of European scholars. They were provided with food and lodgings so that there was no necessity for them to think of earning their bread. They had a pleasant, even a luxurious, place in which to work. In summer they were moved to the coolest part of the palace and in winter they were provided with warm, fur-lined garments, made to their measure and presented to them by the emperor. They lacked, of course, a large library of books in European languages, but a library of sorts had been collected at their own headquarters, which grew in size and importance during the years. At the palace the emperor had one of the finest collections of Chinese books and manuscripts ever gathered together. Learned men were continually searching for additional volumes to augment those which he already possessed, as none but the finest were ever given a place in the imperial collection.

There were few books in his great library with which he himself was unfamiliar. His knowledge of Chinese history and the philosophical writings of the past was beyond that of the majority of scholars ; his remarkable memory aided him to retain in his mind much of what he had read. Searching among his own books, he found many avenues of research closed to him because of the lack of classified material. It was largely as the result of his own experience as well as that of other scholars working under his direction, that he came to realize the need of a great new dictionary and of other standard works of literary and historical reference. The dictionary of classified literary phrases in two hundred and forty parts was only one of the many works of the same kind which were compiled, published, and distributed to the public during his reign ; books which remain in use to-day because the field which they embraced was so wide and the care with which they were arranged was so great, that no subsequent works on the same subjects have ever equalled them in importance.

For many years it had been the task of the Jesuits to instruct the emperor in the sciences of the West. To do so in a manner

satisfactory both to him and to themselves it was necessary that a number of textbooks should be prepared. Their predecessors of the Jesuit order had, for the past hundred years, been constantly translating European books into Chinese, but much remained to be done and before the time of K'ang Hsi none of these works had been translated into Manchu. In collaboration with Chinese scholars many of the Jesuits at the court of K'ang Hsi wrote books during his reign which became important additions to the literature of both the Chinese and the Manchus. Father Verbiest explained their methods of working in words that were clear and precise :—

“In our scientific works,” he wrote, “we seek always to set forth the truth without occupying ourselves unduly with the flowers of rhetoric. The scholars put into Chinese that which we explain to them.” (5)

This collaboration has been ignored, but there was no secrecy about it at the time, as the difficulties of the Chinese literary style is such that no Westerner has ever been able to master all its intricacies, the concise, abbreviated phrasing in which the classics were written amounting almost to a form of shorthand with much unsaid and more left to the imagination or knowledge of the reader. One of the most important works written by Father Verbiest was published in collaboration with Father Grimaldi and one of their Manchu colleagues at the observatory. This system of authorship has always been accepted by the Chinese, who were primarily interested in the work presented to them and indifferent to either the name or fame of the author.

After the death of Father Verbiest and the arrival of the French Jesuits at the court, the Fathers Gerbillon and Bouvet became the most prominent of the Jesuit scholars, because they acted as tutors, mathematicians and even as physicians to the emperor. Father Bouvet wrote :—

“The court was astonished at the audiences which the emperor gave us daily attended only by two or three eunuchs. He conversed familiarly with us on the subject of our sciences, on the manners and customs of our countries as well as on the latest news from the kingdoms of Europe.” (6)

Not only the Chinese scholars, but the emperor himself collaborated with the Jesuits in their work. He wrote long prefaces to their translations, or rather adaptations of scientific

books, and when these were completed they were printed and bound by his order.

Careful, methodical scholars, highly trained and often with brilliant minds, the Jesuits laboured between the brush and the ink-slab, as an unwilling Chinese scribe once said. The necessity for their work might at times seem obscure, but for once the task was congenial and suited their tastes and their temperaments. Time did not exist in this world of oriental calm, as day by day, week by week, year after year, the work went on. When one Jesuit died another would take his place, treading a path that had never been trodden before, often losing his way in a polyglot of tongues.

To please the emperor they sent to Europe for mathematical instruments, which they presented to him for his personal use. These gave him great satisfaction and no other gifts were so acceptable nor so much appreciated. At one time "two machines in which one might observe the eclipses of the sun and moon with the different aspects of the planets for every day in the year", (7) were given places of honour on either side of the throne, while a telescope, one of the first to reach China, was kept in his bedroom to be always ready for use. These gifts enabled him to apply what he had learned and to make his own calculations, which he compared with those of his tutors.

The mandarins at court, observing the success of such gifts, begged the Jesuits to obtain other novelties for them to present to him themselves. It took two years for the order to be transmitted to Europe and the desired object shipped back in a sailing vessel, but the obliging Jesuits were always ready to assist and eventually all sorts of European rarities made their way to court. Besides astronomical instruments, the presents which the emperor received included a thermometer which registered the slightest variation of either heat or cold, clocks, watches, and a fountain for one of his private courts which sent up a jet of water thirty feet high. His children participated in their father's delight in all these strange objects, and as he was a good parent he was always willing to teach them what he had already learned himself.

There was more than a touch of the schoolmaster in the character of K'ang Hsi. He enjoyed passing on to others the knowledge which he had acquired with painstaking

effort, forgetting in his own enthusiasm that his courtiers and his children did not always share his tastes. His passionate approach to life left no time for dull moments. Hunting, fighting, and learning were, in his eyes, equally great adventures. Where he led others must follow as a matter of course.

After he had mastered the principles of geometry and Euclid and was deep in the mysteries of astrology, the emperor had an experience which resembled a conversion, but not in the religious sense as his instructors had desired. One of the Jesuits had presented him with a chart of the heavens and had explained to him in detail the system of Copernicus. The fact that the earth moved round the sun came as a revelation to the emperor. He had heard of it before but had failed either to believe or appreciate its true significance. Suddenly the truth pierced his consciousness and threw him into a state of great excitement. The man who was usually so reserved and restrained in his dealings with others and who never allowed anything to interfere with his duties, for days shut himself away from his ministers, hardly eating or sleeping, lost in the study of a concept which had revolutionized his inner world. His own lack of importance in the vast scheme which controlled and directed the universe was a fact which had to be assimilated. He, the mighty emperor, and his people, who referred to themselves as "all between the four seas", were after all but tiny particles of matter continually whirling in infinite space. Confronted by his own nothingness, the emperor was great enough to accept it. He emerged from his seclusion with eyes that saw the world as a new and wonderful place.

The Jesuits had received their own illumination through their faith. They were Roman Catholics first and scientists afterwards. Science to them was only the means to an end. But the emperor found his own personal salvation in an increasing awareness of the mysteries of the universe. In the fullness of his maturity he was what the Chinese call *chun tzu*, the Superior Man. It was only in his old age, when the light grew dim, that he faltered and made mistakes. Like his father before him who, because of a psychic experience had left the world, the emperor K'ang Hsi, too, had heard the message of the stars, even though his revelation had come to him from a different source.

V

PHYSICIANS AGAINST THEIR WILL

From compiling scientific books the Jesuits turned at the request of the emperor to translating the works of European philosophers, because K'ang Hsi was now eager to learn new and important facts about life as it was understood by men in other parts of the world. This seemed to the Jesuits a unique opportunity to instruct him in the principles of their religion and the books which they chose to translate were selected for the purpose of preparing his mind for baptism. But the emperor soon became aware of the intention behind their activity. He had no wish to have his life further transformed. On the contrary, the realization of the truths which he had received proved temporarily more than he could bear, and he fell ill. During his illness his doctors refused to allow him to open his beloved books and when he finally recovered his versatile mind had turned in another direction. Whatever interest he had formerly had in the lives of the saints or in the concepts believed in by the Roman Catholics had disappeared. The human body, whose mysteries were imperfectly understood by the Chinese, had become of absorbing interest to him. Much against their will, the Jesuits were called away from their translations and required to describe in detail the functions of such organs as the hearts, the lungs, and the liver or, as the Chinese themselves say, the noble and ignoble parts.

To their added dismay, they discovered that this time the emperor was not satisfied with the compilation of text-books. Nothing but actual experiments would satisfy him and very soon a great laboratory was set up in the palace where the unfortunate Fathers stood all day, stirring great pots of boiling fluid and attempting as best they could to make medicines which would relieve the more ordinary complaints of the human body. It was in vain that they protested they were not physicians. K'ang Hsi believed by this time that they were masters of every form of knowledge and were capable of performing any task demanded of them, from checking the floods of the Yellow River to curing him should he be taken ill.



A JESUIT PRIEST IN CHINA DRESSED IN THE ROBES OF A
HIGH MANDARIN

17th century

No alchemist of Medieval Europe working for a princely patron was ever more luxuriously equipped for his experiments than were the unwilling Jesuits, now slaves to the crucible and melting pot. Dressed in their long mandarins' robes, they daily could be seen bending with anxious faces over the gold and silver vessels in which they mixed their brews. Even the vials which held the final result were made of the choicest procelain which the potter could produce. As a precaution the concoctions which finally emerged from their hands were tried first on eunuchs or courtiers before being given to anyone more important, but there was no lack of willing victims. The Jesuits erred on the side of safety and the medicines they prepared were pleasanter to taste and less drastic in their results than those prescribed by the Chinese doctors. The Jesuits themselves were thoroughly sceptical as to the virtue of their products. They much preferred to administer quinine or the imported red wine, sent to them from abroad, when the patient was the emperor. Both were given to him at different times when he fell ill and both were beneficial to him. The Fathers treated him at the risk of their lives, knowing that had he died they would be held responsible, but when on one occasion repeated doses of quinine restored him to health he demonstrated his gratitude by making public acknowledgment of the debt he owed them.

When he showed himself to the people after his recovery four Jesuits were by his side and they remained standing while even the highest officials were obliged to kneel. Addressing the people, who for the first time during his reign had been allowed to remain in the streets when he passed, he told them how his health had been restored by the foreigners. Then turning to the Jesuits he said in a loud voice :—

“You Europeans have always served me with zeal and affection and I have not the least thing for which to reproach you. Many of the Chinese mistrust you but I, who have watched you closely, have never found anything about you that was not correct. I am so firmly convinced of your honesty and good faith that I say, you shall be respected, you shall be believed.”(1)

After this extraordinary testimonial many invalids came to the Fathers to be treated. With the help of simple remedies they were able to relieve distress and by doing so win many

grateful patients to Christ. French pills, of the variety distributed by Louis XIV to his own poor, Indian powders consisting of a form of quinine, and non-intoxicating Spanish wine proved more convincing arguments in favour of the power of the foreign God than all the holy books which had previously been translated into the Chinese language.

Soon after K'ang Hsi presented the Jesuits with a house inside the enclosure of the Forbidden City which had formerly belonged to an important mandarin, and which was reconstructed to suit them. Adjacent to the house he gave them land upon which to build a great church as well as ten thousand taels towards the cost of its construction. When it was finished five years later the emperor wrote with his own hand an inscription to be placed over the door :—

“To the true principal of all things. He is infinitely good and is infinitely just, he illumines, he supports, he regulates all things with supreme authority and with a sovereign justice. He has no beginning and no end. It is he who rules and is the true master.”(2)

The emperor made other public statements during his reign in the form of memorials in which he bore witness to his respect and admiration for the Christians. At times the Jesuits sincerely believed that he would allow himself to be converted, but although this never happened many of his children were baptized. It is said that thirty-five of his sons and twenty of his daughters made public acknowledgment of their faith in the Christian God.

When his passion for Western knowledge was at its height the emperor conceived the idea that a European concubine might be a welcome addition to his household. She, unlike the Jesuits, would not be obliged to leave the palace at night. He had heard so much about the power of the Pope that it seemed to him right and fitting that he should unite himself with the family of that important dignitary rather than form an alliance with one of the European kings who, when compared with the Pope, appeared to him to have about the same status as his own “tribute-bearing” princes. With this end in view, he wrote a long letter which is still preserved in the archives of the French Ministry of

Foreign Affairs ; a strange document which testifies that the desire for a European wife was no mere invention on the part of some foreigner bent on magnifying the emperor's interest in the West. If a reply was sent it was not made public and certainly the request was never granted. The letter runs as follows :—

“ To you, Clement, most blessed of all Popes, blessed and great Emperor of all Popes and Christian Churches, Lord of the Kings of Europe and Friend of God.

“ The most powerful of all powers on earth who is greater than all who are great under the sun and moon ; who sits on the emerald throne of the Chinese Empire, raised upon a hundred golden steps, in order to expound the word of God to all faithful subjects ; who exercises the power of life and death over a hundred and fifteen kingdoms and a hundred and seventy isles, writes this epistle with the virgin feathers of an ostrich.

“ All hail and long life !

“ The time has come when the bloom of Our Imperial Youth shall bring to maturity the fruit of our age, so that at the same time the desire of our true subjects may be fulfilled and a successor to the Throne given to them for their protection. We have resolved, therefore, to unite ourselves in marriage with a beautiful and distinguished maiden, who has been nurtured on the milk of a courageous lioness and of a tender roe. Since the Roman people have always had the reputation of progenitors of brave, chaste, and unsurpassable women, we would stretch forth our powerful hand and take one of them to wife. We hope that it may be your niece or that of another great priest on whom God looks with favour. . . .

“ We wish her to have the eyes of a dove contemplating heaven and earth and the lips of a mussel feeding upon the dawn ; her age shall not exceed two hundred moons ; she shall not have grown taller than a blade of green wheat and her girth shall be as a handful of dried corn. . . .

“ In gratifying our desire, Father and Friend, you will create an alliance and eternal friendship between your kingdom and our powerful land. Our laws will be combined as a creeper clings to a tree. We shall ourselves disseminate our royal blood through many provinces, and shall warm the beds of your princes with our daughters.”(3)

VI

A JESUIT AMBASSADOR

Father Verbiest was growing old. His long journey to Tartary had greatly fatigued him, so that no one was surprised when, after a second trip in the suite of the emperor, his health began to fail rapidly. Even K'ang Hsi knew that never again would his Jesuit friend spend long days in the saddle by his side. At Peking the work which Verbiest had formerly been able to do with so much ease and skill had become too heavy for him. He realized this himself and wrote to Europe asking that an assistant be sent to China. He needed, so he said, a skilled mathematician to help him with his work on the calendar. In the year 1685 Father Antoine Thomas arrived at Macao in answer to his request.

When the emperor heard of the arrival of Father Thomas he decided to make a public demonstration of his regard for the Roman Catholic missionaries. With kindly foresight he sent the following memorial to the tribunal of foreign affairs :—

“Nan Hoai Gin” (the name by which Father Verbiest was known at court) “is getting old. I have heard of the presence at Macao of men also versed in astronomy and other sciences, talented by nature but younger than Nan Hoai Gin. Question Nan Hoai Gin regarding their names. Communicate to me their names in writing. Find out if there are also men who understand medicine.” (1)

There was no necessity for the emperor to ask these questions. Nan Hoai Gin, otherwise Father Verbiest, was his constant companion and he spent several hours each day in his society. But K'ang Hsi had more than one method of dealing with foreigners and the arrival of Father Thomas occurred at a time when the Jesuits were in great favour at court. In order to please them the emperor sometimes inquired in private as to what they desired him to do. Then he would issue a proclamation with reference to the subject under discussion. As his edicts were circulated everywhere any public expression of imperial good will increased the respect with which foreigners were treated by his officials.

The Jesuits all over the empire profited by these obvious signs of esteem.

When K'ang Hsi had received the answers to his questions, as well as the official confirmation of the arrival of Father Thomas, he sent for Father Verbiest and asked him to name two of his colleagues to go to Macao and escort the new arrival to Peking. Verbeist, who was prepared for this request, named the Fathers Grimaldi and Pereira, both of whom were well known to the emperor, for Grimaldi had accompanied him on his last journey to Tartary, and Pereira had been his instructor of music for many years. In any case there was not a great choice because the ranks of the Jesuits at the capital had been depleted by several deaths, and the French mission, long hoped for by Verbiest, had not yet arrived. The choice of his old friends pleased the emperor and before their departure he received them in audience.

"My unique interest is in the public good," he said to his two strange ambassadors. "That is to say, what is in the interests of astronomy and of service to the calendar. No other consideration has anything to do with my sending you to Macao." (2)

"By this he wished us to understand," explained Father Verbiest in a letter to Europe, "that he did not send Father Grimaldi to Macao in order to procure for him European curiosities such as clocks and spectacles but that he had in mind only the good of the state, for in China astronomy is as much part of the government as the courts of law." (3)

Verbiest did not think fit to add that the monarch delighted in clocks and spectacles or in any other strange object of European origin. Years ago Father Grimaldi had won his heart by presenting him with an alarm clock and constructing a fountain which sent up a jet of water thirty feet high. In fact, ever since his arrival at court Grimaldi had never ceased to invent novel objects for his amusement and as a result he had received almost as many honours as Verbiest himself. Even so, at this his last audience before his departure for Macao, Grimaldi was astonished to receive from the hand of the emperor a magnificent belt. K'ang Hsi removed it from about his own waist and presented it to him in the presence of the court. A sword was attached to the belt as well as three purses, one of which

contained sufficient money to buy his equipment and pay his expenses on the journey. This was an unheard of condescension on the part of K'ang Hsi and it amazed the Jesuit quite as much as it did the courtiers, who crowded about him after the audience to congratulate him and wish him a successful journey.

Despite his public proclamation to the contrary, the emperor had not chosen to send Grimaldi to Macao solely in the interests of science. It was only recently that K'ang Hsi had decided to open his ports to foreign trade. Such a decision was against the interests of the trading community of Macao, which before this date had managed the greater part of China's commerce with the West. Sending an emissary to Macao at the very time when the new regulations had been made known to the public was a demonstration that he had not forgotten the foreign settlement. The Chinese were not enthusiastic about this new measure, but it was an experiment which the emperor had determined to try for two years. If at the end of that time the profits derived by the treasury were not as great as he anticipated, the ports would be closed again and trade diverted back to Macao. As the latter might be useful to him again one day he thought it expedient that the inhabitants of the island should see for themselves that he had no prejudices against foreigners. The rank and standing of Father Grimaldi should prove to them that he was prepared, on occasions, to honour a Westerner as he would one of his own Manchu officials.

In the devious mind of the emperor the obvious was always the least important, and it may have been that this journey was only an experiment to test Father Grimaldi's ability in the diplomatic field; a dress rehearsal, as it were, for a greater project which the emperor had in store for him. And in order that no word or action of his new ambassador should escape his notice, Grimaldi left the capital accompanied by five of the emperor's own servants, one of whom was a spy.

The complicated system of espionage instituted by the Manchus extended even to those whom the emperor trusted the most. There was always a spy in every assembly, in every court of law, and in the retinue of every official envoy. These spies sent the emperor detailed reports of all

that went on. Sometimes the Jesuits were conscious of watching eyes, but if so they paid no attention to them. They had become accustomed to have the emperor's personal servants always by their side when they went abroad. Although K'ang Hsi had proved many times by his actions that he had great confidence in their integrity and devotion, and had publicly proclaimed that he trusted them, so universal was his system of observation that not even one of his own children could take any step which was not immediately brought to his attention.

On the road to Macao the little party, with Father Grimaldi at its head, was entertained every night at the expense of the state in one or another of the royal hostleries, which had been erected at suitable distances throughout the empire for the convenience of messengers and officials travelling on government service. During the day the road was cleared for them, a distinction reserved solely for representatives of the emperor. At every town through which they passed they were greeted either by the viceroy of the province or by one of the principal magistrates. Banquets were given for them and presents exchanged, as was the custom of the country.

How different this journey was from those undertaken by the Jesuits before the days of K'ang Hsi. Then they had travelled at their peril, sometimes on foot, often in the meanest fashion. Now Father Grimaldi was clothed in silk and mounted on a fine horse ; he was accompanied by servants and welcomed all along the road. Grimaldi appreciated the fact that the change in the status of his Order had come about owing to the patient efforts made by Father Verbiest. Had it not been for him the work of the Fathers, Ricci and Schall, would have been forgotten after the death of the latter.

When Father Grimaldi arrived at Macao he met with such a magnificent reception that in comparison all other welcomes extended to him on the way seemed as nothing. Macao was the centre of Roman Catholic activity in the Far East. Missionaries landed there when they arrived in China and as a rule remained long enough to acquire some knowledge of the language. In times of persecution Macao became their refuge. Fugitives from Japan as well as from the Chinese empire had flocked there in the past.

At the time of the ascendancy of the pirates, when the people along the coast had been ordered to leave their homes, Macao had been saved from evacuation through the intervention of Father Schall, who guaranteed that the Westerners would defend the island against the pirates' aggression. During the years when Europeans had been free to come and go through Macao, the inhabitants of the island had witnessed many tragic changes of fortune, so that now, when one of their number returned in triumph as the emissary of the emperor, the rejoicing was general. Cannon were fired and the church bells rang as the people flocked into the streets, and a long procession of officials went out to meet Father Grimaldi. Of all the extraordinary sights which the European colony had witnessed nothing could be compared to the return of this Jesuit priest, dressed in a mandarin's robes and travelling with the rank of an imperial ambassador.

And it must have seemed to Grimaldi himself at this moment, when his order had seemingly triumphed over all opposition and when in honouring him the emperor had shown his respect for the Society of Jesus, that long years of further triumph and success lay before him and his associates at Peking. The future had not yet cast its shadow, for he did not know the extent of the controversy that was raging in Europe; a controversy caused by the activities of his order in the Far East. Communications were slow, letters were lost *en route*, and the vessels which carried them sometimes foundered, so that even Father Verbiest remained in ignorance of the censure which he and his companions had received for the many compromises they had been forced to make. When Father Grimaldi dismounted from his horse amidst the cheers of the populace, no one had any suspicion that the Jesuit slogan, "The end justifies the means," was in time to prove the undoing of the order. No one knew that Macao, the seat of Grimaldi's triumph, was to become the centre of bitter rivalries and vicious hatreds, which were to have disastrous and far-reaching results. That day no one would have believed it, had they been told, that a future papal envoy would end his days there in a fortress on a rock.

Quiet Father Thomas, the Jesuit mathematician who was waiting on the island, and who now accompanied

Grimaldi back to Peking, cherished many ambitions beneath his sombre garments. He had hoped to succeed Verbiest as royal astronomer upon his arrival at the capital. Instead, he found himself in the position of the old man's secretary. Father Verbiest was now at the height of his influence and as Father Thomas was an adaptable man, he resigned himself to his subordinate position and became a most efficient and active collaborator to Verbiest who initiated him into many of the mysteries of the Jesuits' policy.

The presence of Father Thomas was necessary in Peking because the emperor had determined to send Father Grimaldi to Europe as his first ambassador to the West with messages to many of the rulers and with letters to the Czar of the Russians, to be forwarded by the Vatican to Moscow. It was during Grimaldi's absence on this most important mission that Father Verbiest died, and Father Thomas was promoted to the important post of royal astronomer, being the only Jesuit in Peking competent to become the director of the bureau of mathematics. It was therefore Father Thomas who became the link, so to speak, between Father Verbiest and the French Jesuits, who arrived too late to receive the benefit of the dying man's final instructions. And it was largely owing to Father Thomas that Verbiest's foreign policy was made clear to the newcomers, who were obliged, without previous training, to continue his efforts and carry them through to a successful conclusion.

Long before the death of Father Verbiest, Thomas had been made aware of the part played by the Jesuits in directing the foreign policy of the Chinese empire. During the years of his residence at court, Verbiest had served as interpreter between the emperor and representatives of the Western nations. Towards the end of his life he had even acted on occasions with the status of a minister of foreign affairs. This was partly due to the fact that he spoke many languages, perhaps not too correctly, but with sufficient fluency for all practical purposes. Ambassadors from Holland, Portugal, Russia, and Siam were among those who made use of his services. He was always ready to assist these diplomatic representatives with his advice, and when they were received in audience, he stood near the throne.

Whenever possible negotiations were conducted in Latin, as then the Jesuits had the advantage.

It was only natural that the Roman Catholic point of view should influence the proceedings. Sometimes, as in the case of the Dutch, the foreign policy of Verbiest was not in accord with that of the emperor. The Dutch were Calvinists, and while K'ang Hsi appreciated their fine qualities and respected their strength and determination, he was never able to persuade Verbiest that their religion should not weigh against them. The Jesuit much preferred to see trade privileges given to the Portuguese, because this nation was Roman Catholic, and as long as he lived he used his influence, which at times was considerable, to prevent the Hollanders from obtaining a commercial treaty with China.

The ambassador from Siam, on the contrary, had no cause to complain of his treatment. Portuguese served as a common language, and when the Siamese envoy departed he sent Father Verbiest a letter of appreciation and a beautiful statue of Christ made of pure gold.

A protracted visit by a foreign ambassador at Peking was not an experience which an envoy enjoyed. Surrounded by spies and practically prisoners in their hotel, separated from those who served them by the barrier of language, visitors from other countries were completely at the mercy of the missionaries, because no one else could speak their language. The Jesuits were often prevented from extending to foreigners the courtesies which they would have liked to show. A traveller from Europe was an event in their lives, but their actions were restricted by their position at court and by the suspicions of the emperor which prevented free intercourse among the foreigners residing at his capital.

Among those who benefited the most through the intervention of Father Verbiest were the Russians. Some years ago the Jesuit had been surprised to discover that Russia was at war with China. Once he had learned this important fact, the settlement of the dispute became of vital importance to him, because he had conceived the idea of rapid communication between Europe and the Orient by way of Siberia. He was ignorant of the real distance and he thought that crossing Siberia on the frozen snow would be vastly preferable to the dangers of the sea voyage.

During the reign of K'ang Hsi the Jesuits at Peking were constantly working to improve the means of transportation between China and the West. Travel by sea was dangerous in the seventeenth century ; epidemics, disease, lack of food and water, the danger of being taken prisoner by pirates or enemy ships, not to mention shipwrecks which often overtook the frail sailing vessels were the ordinary hazards faced by the traveller. Lack of wind caused delays ; too much wind brought disaster. Verbiest had experienced many of these misfortunes before he reached China and he longed to save others from the ordeals which he himself had endured.

To achieve this result he was careful to conciliate the Russians. He knew that the members of his order were not popular at Moscow. The Jesuits had made the mistake of supporting the "false Dimitri", the pretended son of Ivan the Terrible. When the latter was defeated and killed, they were driven from the country. Father Verbiest had the delicate task of establishing peace between the Chinese and the Russians while, at the same time, he attempted to convince the Russians that it would be to their advantage to be on terms of friendship with the Society of Jesus.

As a minister of foreign affairs for the Chinese empire, Verbiest was undoubtedly efficient. His influence might have been wider had he been able to forget that he was a priest first and a diplomat afterwards. He worked on the principle that nothing which was not of benefit to his order could possibly be of advantage to the state. The emperor displayed tolerance and a certain humour towards this peculiar point of view, which at times seemed incomprehensible to him. But he appreciated the sincerity of the Jesuit, who never allowed him to forget that he placed God before any earthly interest. Serving God, to Father Verbiest, meant working for the Society of Jesus. After that, but a long way behind, came his very real loyalty to his imperial patron and the work he was required to do, whether as scientist, engineer, or diplomat. Even on his death-bed, when his mind was reviewing the past, Father Verbiest wished to remind K'ang Hsi for the last time of his true feelings on this most important subject of divided loyalties. In his last letter to the emperor he explained once again his point of view :—

"Dread Sire," he wrote in a hand trembling with weakness. "I die content, in that I have spent almost all my life in your majesty's service, but I beg your majesty will be pleased to remember when I am dead, that my only aim was to gain in the great monarch of the East a protector of the most holy religion in the world." (4)

This letter was the sincere statement of a noble and deeply religious man and little did Father Verbiest dream how it would be misquoted in Europe. Strangely enough he was better understood, and far more appreciated by K'ang Hsi than by the church to which he had devoted his life. The reward of his years of labour in the service of Rome was a papal decree depriving him of his position as the Superior of the Jesuits in China. Fortunately for his peace of mind he died before the decree reached Peking.

VII

THE ARRIVAL OF THE FRENCH

While the Dutch and the Portuguese were competing for trading privileges in China during the seventeenth century, the French, on the contrary, remained aloof. It was only towards the close of the century that the thought of entering a field which presented new commercial possibilities for his nation occurred seriously to the mind of the French king. His ships had hitherto ventured no farther east than Siam. During the reign of Louis XIV, the *Amphithrite*, a French sailing vessel, carried the first cargo of goods direct to Chinese waters. But that was not until religion had paved the way and French priests had preceded the merchants.

Père la Chaise, the confessor of Louis XIV, first drew the attention of the king to the advantages of active participation in Far Eastern affairs. His opportunity to do so came when Father Verbiest, realizing that the power of Portugal was on the wane and that the patronage of that country was no longer sufficient to support the Roman Catholic mission in the Orient, wrote a letter to Europe urgently requesting that new workers be sent to China. When this letter was shown to Louis he decided upon a step which would increase his own prestige in the eyes of the church and which, at the same time, would give him a chance to establish a foothold in China for the purposes of trade.

Through the Jesuits at the court of Versailles, Louis XIV had received news of the emperor K'ang Hsi. The French king's curiosity had been aroused, because here was a monarch on the other side of the world who appeared to share his own ideas on the subject of ceremonious living. It is true there were certain points of similarity between the courts of the two great rulers. When Louis XIV said : "L'état, c'est moi," he was only attempting to impose a system which in China was an established fact. There would have been no necessity for K'ang Hsi to make such a statement ; everyone took it for granted. He was an absolute monarch whose words were considered as oracles

and whose commands were as strictly and readily executed as if they came from heaven.

Both rulers surrounded themselves with an etiquette so rigid that it resembled a religious ceremony, but while the "Sun King" of France introduced much of the ritual himself to increase his own importance in the eyes of his people, the "Son of Heaven" had inherited it from his predecessors and dispensed with it when he could. In the France of Louis XIV the water for the king's morning toilet was handed to him by a prime minister. In China, when K'ang Hsi wished to honour a guest, he presented him with a cup of wine from which he himself had previously drunk. The difference was one of local custom and not of essential significance.

Like the emperor of China, Louis XIV complicated his life with multiple wives, although these ladies were called mistresses in France and concubines in China. The status of both was much the same, but the position of concubine was the more honourable of the two and certainly less insecure. Both rulers came into conflict with the Roman Catholic priests at their respective courts on the subject of women. Louis was refused Easter communion by reason of his relations with the witty and amusing Mme de Montespan, while K'ang Hsi, although he never became a Christian, dreaded the rage of Father Verbiest when the latter attacked him because he condoned polygamy. At such times the emperor would refuse to receive him, saying kindly : " If I see him, he will fly out into some indecency, which I must be forced although unwillingly to resent."

Further comparisons in the matter of personal character would be all to the advantage of the Chinese emperor. Louis was no such scholar as his contemporary K'ang Hsi, neither did he possess the tolerant wisdom of the latter. The former spent vast sums and depleted his treasury. The latter was frugal to the point of stinginess where he himself was concerned, remitting taxes whenever it was possible and reducing the burdens of the people. His only prodigal expenditure was for projects of benefit to the state. He built up his empire for his successor, while Louis sowed the seeds of future disintegration.

Both rulers, as they grew older and the desire for relations with women weakened, turned increasingly to the Jesuits.

When Louis was secretly married to Mme de Maintenon, herself no longer in her first youth, and in this way legalized his position in the eyes of the church, the Jesuits were in full control at the court of France. Letters were continually going back and forth between the Fathers at the court of Peking and the Fathers at the court of Versailles and through them Louis was kept informed as to all that went on in China. He was interested in the country long before it was suggested to him by Père la Chaise that he send his own priests there. When he decided to do so, he chose five of the most brilliant of the French Jesuits and imitating the Chinese emperor raised them to the position of court mathematicians. A yearly subsidy allotted to the mission from the privy purse and magnificent presents for K'ang Hsi purchased with funds from the same source gave the Fathers almost the standing of ambassadors.

In March, 1685, the five priests set sail from Brest. They were all remarkable men. Father Gerbillon, polished courtier and man of the world, was perhaps the most gifted of them all. His unusual facility in languages and his capacity for diplomatic negotiations were to make him indispensable to K'ang Hsi. Father Louis Le Comte became the historian of the party. His keen powers of observation combined with a liveliness of style made his chronicle of enduring interest. In a moment of frankness he confessed :—

“ China is a very ceremonious country wherein all strangers but especially the French have occasion for a good stock of patience.”

Father Bouvet, the third member of the party, wrote a history of the life of K'ang Hsi. He became one of the emperor's tutors and played an important part in establishing trade relations between his own country and the one of his adoption. The remaining two priests were sent to the provinces and their work, although of great importance, was not so well known as that of their compatriots.

Each of the five Frenchmen was both a scientist and a scholar, the scientific interest, however, predominating. This fact was stressed because owing to the jealousy of the king of Portugal, who viewed with suspicious eyes the actions of his rival in the Orient, it had not been considered expedient to give to the mission a purely religious character.

It was due to the personality and learning of each individual Jesuit that the French delegation assumed an importance quite out of proportion to its size. Each man in his own individual way made his contribution to the history of his times. Those who resided at court continued the work of Father Verbiest in directing and shaping the policies of the empire, but all contributed to the great store of knowledge and information which the West was gradually acquiring of the Asiatic world.

As far as Siam the Frenchmen had an uneventful voyage. It was only after a considerable period of time spent in that country that their adventures began. The ship to which they were obliged to transfer offered little beyond a most primitive means of transportation.

"We were on board a small Chinese vessel," wrote Father Louis Le Comte, "without a shelter against the weather and so straightened for want of room, that we could not lie at length. Near us was an idol, which had turned black from the smoke of the lamp which was continually burning before it and which did not a little offend us as it was worshipped every day with diabolical superstition. We had scarce any water to quench our immoderate thirst which the excessive heat of the day brought upon us. Three meals of rice were our daily allowance although the captain, I confess, often invited us to eat meat with him; but that being always first offered to the idol, we looked on it rather with horror than appetite. In this manner we spent above a month." (1)

The constant fear of pirates, which was a real and not an imaginary danger, the cramped quarters and terrible storms made the voyage anything but an agreeable one for the sufferers on board the little vessel. However, it proved in the end to be of benefit to France, because owing to the insistence of one of these travellers, Father Bouvet, a few years later the first French vessel was chartered for the long sea voyage to China.

When the travellers arrived at Nimpo, on the coast of China, their troubles were not yet over. For some time they were obliged to remain on board their ship as the local mandarins could not decide what to do with them. The name of Father Verbiest at length proved the talisman which enabled them to go ashore and they were temporarily

lodged in a house in the suburbs of the city, with their books, images, and mathematical instruments. The city officials were friendly and called upon them, but the viceroy of the province, who distrusted all foreigners, was angry when he heard they had been allowed to land. He immediately sent off a letter to the tribunal of foreign affairs at Peking, advising the deportation of any foreigners who attempted to enter the country without permission as well as the confiscation of the vessel which brought them.

The Fathers lived in a state of suspense while waiting for a reply to their own letter to Father Verbiest at Peking. Happily the uncertainties of the Chinese postal service were unknown to them, and they did not realize how slight was the chance of their ever receiving a reply. At this period the post was reserved for the use of the emperor and government officials. It was carried by relays of fast runners from one post-house to another. Should a runner desire to do so, there was nothing to prevent him from destroying unofficial documents confined to his care without risk of either detection or punishment. But on this occasion fate was kind and the letter was eventually delivered into the hands of Father Verbiest.

The emperor was hunting in Tartary when Verbiest received the news of the arrival of the French Jesuits. When he realized how serious was their situation because of the attitude of the viceroy, he knew it was imperative to inform K'ang Hsi of all the circumstances at once. It was not etiquette to write to him direct. All communications must be sent through official channels, but Verbiest was a man of resource. He wrote to a friend in attendance on the emperor, explaining what had happened to the French Jesuits at Nimpo and then, as though by an error, he slipped this letter into the post-bag which was delivered into the emperor's own hands. When K'ang Hsi received the request for the deportation of five foreigners from the tribunal of foreign affairs, he was already informed as to the true identity of the mysterious strangers. The message he dispatched in reply was in direct opposition to the request of the viceroy :—

“ Let all come to me. Those who are mathematicians will remain at court. The others can go to the provinces and settle where they please.”

This imperial edict completely changed the status of the members of the French mission. They left Nimpo escorted by a procession of officials and musicians. On the Grand Canal a splendid barge was waiting for them. "I never met with any way of travelling less tiresome than this," wrote Father Le Comte, delighted with his temporary home. Peaceful days followed, floating in comfort upon the water. At night, when the barge lay at anchor, delegates chosen from amongst the people of the nearest town watched on shore so that the Jesuits, now the guests of the emperor, should sleep undisturbed.

On the 3rd of January in the year 1688 they left the barge and found horses and sedan-chairs waiting for them. It was bitter cold ; snow covered the ground and the rivers were frozen. Progress was necessarily slow ; so slow that it was not until five weeks later that the little party reached Peking. No news had been received by them on the journey and it was only when their chairs were carried into the city that they learned of the recent death of Father Verbiest. It was he who had arranged for them to enter the country, he had looked after their comfort and protected them on their way north, yet they arrived too late to thank him for what he had done. All that remained was to take part in his funeral procession and weep beside his bier.

Once again the Jesuits in China had lost a great leader. Like his predecessors, the Fathers Ricci and Schall, Father Verbiest had possessed more than the necessary qualifications demanded by the high standards of his order. Clever and resourceful, devoted and loyal, he had never once stopped to think of himself. All his life he had lived in the simplest fashion, his house and his table far below those of other mandarins of his high rank. Often his clothes were so shabby that the emperor remarked upon them and sent him material for new ones with orders to discard the old garments.

Mild and reasonable in all things except his religion, Verbiest was a fanatic where that was concerned. Inflexible when it came to any measure which was against his conscience and not for the benefit of his order, he would willingly have suffered martyrdom for his faith. More than any other one man, he had worked to bring China into the brotherhood of European nations. Not to be exploited by

them in regard to trade, but rather as an ally, sharing the same ambitions for peace and worshipping the same God.

It may have been a premonition of his approaching death that had inspired Father Verbiest to write to Europe for additional helpers. Younger men were needed to fill the ranks of the Jesuits in Peking, men who would not find the work too heavy when he was gone. The imminent arrival of the French Jesuits must have relieved his mind during his last days, especially as he realized that one of their number would be forced to take his place.

But no one knew at that time, least of all Father Gerbillon himself as he stepped from his sedan-chair at the door of the Jesuit college, that many of the burdens of the dead man would fall upon his own shoulders before he had time to prepare himself for them. Verbiest had had the priceless advantage of being trained by Adam Schall. Gerbillon, on the contrary, was obliged to plunge directly into the vortex of court intrigue and he was expected to grapple with the complicated international affairs of China even before he knew the language or had found his moorings in a foreign country.

VIII

RESPECT FOR THE DEAD

During the bitterly cold month of February, 1688, the court went into mourning for Bochita, the empress-dowager, who had died the same week as Father Verbiest. The emperor was hunting in Tartary when word reached him of the illness of his grandmother. Only stopping to change horses, he travelled day and night to reach her side. His grief was deep and sincere. Bochita had meant much to him in his youth and only recently he had shown his devotion by taking her with him on a long journey through the territory of the Mongols, where she had been able to visit her kinsmen and renew the associations of her youth. Surrounded by her usual followers, the lama priests, the old lady had been received with the honours due to royalty and old age by the Mongol princes, who came to pay their respects to her in her tent. Bochita had enjoyed the journey. It was the last outstanding event of her long and adventurous life.

After her death the emperor showed his respect for her memory by ordering elaborate funeral ceremonies to be conducted in her honour. In the courtyard of the palace where her body lay in state, high officials, regardless of the cold, mourned the passing of the valiant old lady who had risen above personal sorrow to do her best for her grandson and his people. It was many years before the emperor himself could pass the palace where she had lived without tears in his eyes. As it was necessary that he should appoint an empress-dowager to succeed her, one of the former concubines of his father, Shun-chih, was elevated to the position which Bochita had occupied with so much dignity during many long years.

Despite his grief the emperor did not forget the world outside the Forbidden City nor his foreign friends. The arrival of the Frenchmen from the court of the great barbarian ruler had aroused his curiosity. He thought it a friendly gesture on the part of the French king to send him tribute in the form of learned scientists and he was anxious to see the portrait of Louis XIV which they had brought



A CHINESE FUNERAL

with them. When the first twenty-seven days of close mourning for Bochita had passed, a gentleman from the court appeared at the Jesuit college to question the newcomers. K'ang Hsi was anxious to know what the French court thought of his journey to Tartary and his defeat of the southern rebels. How high was the standard of learning in Europe? Had there been any new and important scientific discoveries made in the past few years? The answers to these and many other inquiries were carefully written down by the emissary before he went on to speak of the death of Father Verbiest. The emperor, he said, had cherished a deep and unique affection for the Jesuit and wished to show his respect for his memory.

When the first part of the interview had been terminated, the messenger approached the more important part of his business with a slight hesitation. What he had been told to say was private, so private that no mention of it must ever escape their lips. The emperor was aware the Frenchmen must conform to court etiquette and present him with a petition stating their reasons for coming to his empire and the business which they intended to transact there. Such a petition required great care in execution. It would be read by the entire court and mistakes in style or wording were, in matters of this kind, considered to be serious faults. Because the emperor realized that no one else could do it so well, he wished to attend to the petition himself. If the Jesuits would prepare it and send it to him privately, he would correct it and give it back to them to copy before it was presented to him officially.

Considerate as K'ang Hsi always was of those who served him faithfully, he had thought of this gesture of friendship out of regard for the memory of his old friend Father Verbiest who, had he lived, would have known how to write the petition himself. It was, however, an action which would have been misunderstood by the court had it become known. It placed the emperor in the unusual position of being in league with the foreigners and against his own ministers. The latter were always only too willing to find some fault in the conduct of Westerners, whose intimacy with the emperor was viewed with suspicion and mistrust. Only confidence, built up year after year through mutual dependence, could have made the proud monarch depart

from the rigid formality with which he was surrounded in this significant manner. As he had believed in the word of Father Verbiest, so he was prepared to have confidence in these strange men, whom he had never seen, but who belonged to the same order. They were the younger brothers of his old and valued friend and in the Confucian scheme of ethics such a relationship was understood, because it had a definite place.

The petition was duly corrected and returned to the Jesuits. It was then written on a small varnished board, which was wrapped in yellow silk. The first time that the Frenchmen were received in audience it was formally presented to K'ang Hsi. The style was classical and the execution faultless, for it had been prepared by a master hand. The emperor had taken pains to perfect the wording of a request which he had not the slightest intention of granting. The missionaries begged leave to settle in the provinces. The emperor, on the contrary, was determined to keep all five men near his person at court. It took all the dexterity of Father Pereira, now the superior of the Jesuits in China, to achieve a compromise. Only after considerable persuasion was K'ang Hsi willing to concede a point.

"We'll divide the spoils," he agreed in the end. "I'll take two at your choice and you shall distribute the other three as you will. What can you say against this?" (1)

Had they been so many pounds of tea, or some other form of tribute sent to him by a friendly Power, the French Jesuits could not have been disposed of by the emperor in a more casual manner. Not one of the new arrivals had the slightest idea of what was taking place. They spoke no word of either Manchu or Chinese and the negotiations were conducted by Father Pereira while they remained in ignorance of their fate. Eventually it was decided that the Fathers Gerbillon and Bouvet should remain at court while the others were sent to the provinces. Unfortunately Louis Le Comte was not one of those chosen to remain at the side of the emperor. Had he exercised his great talents in writing an account of life as it was lived at the court of K'ang Hsi, his tale would have been without equal, because he was a man who saw behind the appearance of things. Peeping through his fingers as he remained on his knees while his fate was being decided, he realized the great good

nature and genuine kindness of the emperor. His unaffected simplicity of manner was a surprise to the Frenchman, used as he was to that pompous monarch Louis XIV.

The room in which the audience took place had been denuded of ornaments, as the court was still in deep mourning. The furniture consisted of a long sofa, which took up the whole width of the room. On it the emperor sat with his legs crossed under him dressed in a vest of black satin trimmed with sable. Books and papers were on a small table by his side. Ranged down the room, like motionless statues, stood a row of young eunuchs, plainly dressed and unarmed.

"He is somewhat above the middle stature," wrote Le Comte, who had asked permission to take a good look at the imperial countenance, "and though pretty corpulent, was less so than a Chinese would wish to be. He was full-visaged, disfigured with the smallpox, had a broad forehead, little eyes, and a small nose. In short though he had not an air of majesty he had a look of great good nature." (2)

As was the custom upon entering a room where the emperor was seated, the visitors advanced quickly, almost at a trot, until they were opposite to him. Then they fell on their knees, bowed their heads twice to the ground, and stood up again. The same greeting was repeated three times before they were commanded to come forward and kneel in a row before the emperor. Father Pereira had drilled them in advance for the audience. He wore the robes of a Chinese mandarin while his companions were dressed in the usual Jesuit costume, adding a sombre note to the colour scheme of the room, which was predominantly white in deference to the traditional idea of mourning.

After the audience tea was served in another apartment and each Jesuit was presented with a gift of a hundred pistols. "Which seemed but mean," commented the realistic Le Comte, "considering whom it came from, but was very considerable in respect to the custom of China where it is the maxim of all great persons to take as much and give as little as they can. On the other hand, the emperor loaded us with honours and ordered one of his officers to wait on us at our house." (3)

The two Frenchmen, Gerbillon and Bouvet, were at once obliged to take up their duties at court. There was much work for them, as the Fathers Pereira and Thomas, the only

other Jesuits remaining in Peking, had their time fully occupied with the observatory and the compilation of the calendar. Gerbillon and Bouvet were obliged to devote a great part of their attention to learning the two languages required of them. Gerbillon was especially talented in this direction and the emperor, to accelerate his progress, assigned to him the best of native teachers. In a short space of time he became so proficient in the Manchu tongue that K'ang Hsi was able to make use of his services in a diplomatic capacity and little by little he prepared himself to assume many of the duties of the late Father Verbiest.

The story of the life of K'ang Hsi, first told in the letters of Father Verbiest, was continued in documents written by the two Frenchmen who remained at court. No single Jesuit biographer lived to recount the events in the life of the emperor from infancy to old age. One took up the tale where the other had left off. For many years to come Father Gerbillon was to be the emperor's companion on all his travels ; it was his task to take up the narrative and continue it until the day when he himself died.

The burial of Father Verbiest was delayed at the express orders of the emperor until the court had gone out of deep mourning. Then he sent two mandarins to the Jesuit college to represent him with instructions to pay every sign of respect to the body of the dead priest. The coffin had been placed in a great hall and before it the mandarins made obeisance, remaining for a long time with their faces to the ground, weeping and groaning according to the instructions of the Confucian canon, which regulates the proper expressions of grief. One of the two then read aloud a statement which the emperor had prepared and which he had ordered to be placed upon the coffin. The proclamation read :—

“ We seriously consider within ourselves that Father Verbiest has, of his own good will, left Europe to come to our domains, and has spent the greater part of his life in our service ; we must say this for him, that during all the time he took care of the mathematics, his predictions never failed, but always agreed with the motions of the heavens. Besides, far from neglecting our orders, he has ever proved himself exact, diligent, faithful, unalterable, and constant in his labour until he has finished his work.” (4)

While the body lay in state during the interval which elapsed before the day set for the burial, many officials of the court sent testimonials of their respect and admiration until the great hall in which the coffin rested was hung with large banners of silk, upon which eulogies were written. Others sent presents and many came in person to weep before the bier. On the day of the funeral, the 11th March, 1688, the emperor sent his father-in-law to represent him. Early in the morning he arrived with other high officials of the realm to walk in the procession behind the body of a humble Roman Catholic priest as the personal representative of the sovereign. In the long history of the Chinese empire, stretching from mythological times to the present, no such honour has ever been accorded to a foreigner before or since.

Many years before the Jesuits had been given a burial ground by the last of the Ming emperors. To reach it the procession was obliged to pass through the streets, that day lined with throngs of curious people. A trophy thirty feet high, varnished over with red, upon which were written the names and titles of the dead Jesuit, led the procession. After it followed a great cross hung with flags and carried between two rows of converts clothed in white. In one hand each carried a lighted taper and in the other a handkerchief to dry their tears. Pictures of the Virgin, Saint Michael and other saints were carried between rows of Chinese Christians, who walked on either side devoutly praying.

The emperor's proclamation, written on a large piece of yellow satin, followed after the sacred relics. It preceded the heavy gilded coffin carried by sixty bearers. Behind the coffin walked the Jesuit fathers who had come from all over the empire to attend the ceremony. Last of all came the deputies of the emperor and a throng of mandarins and lesser officials.

At the burial ground the coffin was lowered into an underground vault enclosed by brick walls. The service to the dead was read over it. It was a solemn moment for the little band of exiles listening to the holy words. Those who had spent the better part of their lives in China had seen their companions one by one lowered into this same vault. Each one knew that some day he himself would be buried there, far from his home, friends, and relations. Mingled

with their sorrow for the loss of Father Verbiest were tears of pity which they shed for themselves. Each one was thinking of his home, his personal loneliness, and his concealed longing for his own people. The five Frenchmen watched with curious eyes. They had not been in China long enough to realize the full significance of the scene. As yet they did not know that for the majority of this devoted brotherhood the only escape from the service of the foreign emperor was through death.

It was with thoughts that were far away and eyes dimmed with tears that the Fathers listened to the words pronounced by the father-in-law of the emperor at the close of the service.

"Father Verbiest," he said, "has been of considerable service to the emperor and to the state; of which his imperial majesty being sensible has sent me with these lords to make public acknowledgement of it on his behalf, that all the world may know the singular affection his majesty did ever bear him while he lived and the great grief he has received at his death." (5)

It was a moment or two before Father Pereira could control himself sufficiently to make a suitable reply. With a voice choked with sobs he expressed the gratitude of the mission for the emperor's past and present kindness; kindness which did not stop at words because shortly after seven hundred crowns were sent from the palace to be spent on the erection of a tomb for Father Verbiest. The message which the emperor had written to be carried in the funeral procession was to be engraved on a slab of stone.

The passing of Father Verbiest appeared to have roused the curiosity of K'ang Hsi on the subject of life after death. Every day for several weeks he sent one of his confidential messengers to question the Fathers about the condition of souls in the next world; about heaven, hell and purgatory, the existence of God, and the means necessary to obtain salvation. The Jesuits were greatly excited because they saw behind these questions the state of mind which usually precedes a conversion. Each fresh indication of interest added to the joy which filled their hearts. They were convinced that this great monarch and all his people would soon bow their heads before the all-embracing majesty of the Cross.

IX

TROUBLE WITH THE RUSSIANS

Ten years before the arrival of the French Jesuits at Peking, the following edict had been issued from the Forbidden City :—

“The White Khan of Russia sent his subject Nicolai Hambriolovitch with tribute of local articles. His representation was to the effect that Russia lay far away in remote obscurity ; that from ancient times there had been no relations with China ; that he was ignorant of Chinese letters and unacquainted with the proper style of address ; that he now inclined toward civilization, expressed his devotion, and was desirous to open tribute relations.” (1)

For purposes of local propaganda the edict left nothing to be desired. Its fault lay in its almost complete divorce from the truth. The Czar had sent an envoy to Peking, but neither the Czar nor his envoy had the slightest idea of the curious interpretation which would be placed upon the visit.

Intermittent fighting had been taking place for a long time between the Chinese and the Russians over the question of the boundary between the two countries. The Muscovite envoy had come to China to make some arrangement which would settle the question once and for all. At that period neither Great Power knew with any degree of precision where the authority of one ended and that of the other began. Maps of Siberia did not exist. Even an adequate chart of the Chinese empire was yet to be made. As the Russian people did not themselves know the limits of their territory the difficulties of indicating the frontier had so far proved insurmountable.

A fort built of earth and wood, which the Russians called Albasin and the Chinese Yacsa, was the chief point of contention between the two countries. It was situated on the Amour River and it had been originally built by the Russians on territory which the Chinese claimed as their own because its nominal owners, the Kalka Mongols, were vassals of their emperor. The fort had changed hands several times, although the remote district in which it was situated was of little real importance. Like all other towns,

fortifications, and rivers near the border it had been named by the Chinese, Manchus, Russians, and Mongols each in their own native tongue. Because of this plurality of names, misunderstandings often resulted as to the actual territory under dispute.

When the Russians were in possession of the fort it provided a convenient refuge for Chinese political prisoners, who were allowed to slip over the frontier at this point, to the great annoyance of the emperor, a firm believer in the execution of justice. Retaliation was impossible because of the presence of fierce bands of Cossacks, who were always ready for trouble and welcomed any excuse to raid the territory of their southern neighbours. The situation was further complicated by the divergent political aspirations of the two countries directly concerned, each one being ignorant of and entirely uninterested in the other's point of view.

Russia had only recently become a participator in events which took place against an Asiatic background. Previous to the sixteenth century the territory which the Muscovites had appropriated and called Siberia had been the home of roving nomad tribes of various racial stock, closely allied to the Mongols in customs and habits. There had been no pre-arranged plan with regard to the conquest of Siberia. It was almost by chance that the Russians had penetrated into the country. The first hardy adventurers had been driven by necessity to trade with the nomads, bartering goods in exchange for the pelts of animals. Little by little, traders advanced towards the east, attracted by the presence of the sable, black fox, squirrel or otter, whose fur could be sold for a profit in the markets of Moscow. Great, rough, bearded men, these early adventurers were hardly more civilized than the nomads with whom they came into contact. At the beginning of its history as an appendage of Muscovy, as Russia was called in the seventeenth century, Siberia had become the home of lawless Cossacks, escaped prisoners, or runaway slaves, all looking for a chance to make quick profits and start life anew.

In Siberia towns built of wood sprang up overnight. A few monasteries were built in various places, but the only real civilization was brought by Swedish prisoners, who had been captured in one of the numerous wars

between their country and Russia. They passed their monotonous lives in imparting their own knowledge of arts and crafts to the primitive people amongst whom they lived. Travellers of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries mention these people as scattered throughout the country, and they relate how the Swedes created small oases of cleanliness and comparative comfort in the midst of dirt and ignorance.

The Russians themselves had little in the way of civilization to impart to anyone. The peasants were poverty stricken, the nobles illiterate. Although they were hardened to fatigue, those of the lower classes were idle by nature and worked with reluctance and only under threat of the lash. The majority were slaves of the Czar or the nobles and were treated worse than had they been cattle. All lived in wretched huts, where during the cold weather the family huddled together on top of a central stove. Ignorance and laziness were qualities not confined to the peasants; the population as a whole was unwilling either to learn or to work, with the unfortunate result that the professions as well as the trades were all in the hands of foreigners. Under Peter the Great, who attempted to Westernize his country, foreigners were given command of his armies, they constructed his navy and conducted his diplomatic negotiations. It was rare that a true Russian was chosen to hold a high position.

The territory in the hands of the Muscovites eventually extended to the borders of the lands of the Manchus and the Mongols. Had a Chinese emperor and not a Manchu ruled over the Middle Kingdom, the Russians might have advanced southward as far as the Great Wall, but to K'ang Hsi the province of Liao-tung, the home of his ancestors, and the lands of the Kalka Mongols north of the Gobi desert were as much a part of his empire as China proper. He had no intention of allowing outlying districts which acknowledged his sovereignty to fall into alien hands. It was his policy, and one which he consistently pursued, to use his vassals, the Mongols, to protect his empire rather than to menace it. For that reason any encroachment of their territory was looked upon as an attack against his own power.

The Russians, on their side, were not so much interested

in territory as in trade. They had more land than they either needed or desired and their pressing problems developed from lack of money. Siberia had been conquered more or less by accident in pursuit of trade. Trade with China appeared even more lucrative, because the vast empire to the south provided an unlimited market for the matchless Siberian pelts. The Czar Peter, who was still a young man at the end of the seventeenth century, was to find himself continually in need of funds for his military adventures. What better method was there of paying for foreign wars than with gold and silver extracted from the pockets of Chinese merchants? Then there were the products of China which could be sold at a profit at home. Chinese silks and other luxuries were fashionable at the French court, which Moscow so ardently desired to imitate. Caravans loaded with the skins of animals could go down into China and return with the desired objects which the Russians were too ignorant or too lazy to manufacture for themselves.

The Society of Jesus was a third factor that entered into the arena of Siberian politics. The Jesuits had their own ambitions with regard to that country, one of which was free transportation for both missionaries and post. They wished to regain in Russia the position which they had lost through their support of the "false Dimitri", and to have access once more to the Russian court from which they had been ejected. Peter was their avowed enemy. No man was more obnoxious to him than a Jesuit, but could they succeed in doing him a favour his opinion and policy might be modified. It was a delicate position for the Jesuits. How could they make the interests of their Order agree with those of the two rival empires, each of which would be only too ready to persecute them for the slightest slip? Their enemies at the court of Peking would be quick to take advantage of any indication that they favoured Russia, while if they worked whole-heartedly for China they would be unable to come to terms with Czar Peter.

The Muscovites had two czars on the throne when the negotiations between China and Russia were opened. Ivan and Peter, two brothers, had jointly succeeded their father. During their minority the power was in the hands of their sister Sophia, the regent. Ivan was an idiot and therefore

the natural successor was Peter, but as the regent had ambitions of her own, she favoured the cause of the former. At the Russian court, where culture was at a low ebb, there were only four men who could read or write Latin. Illiteracy was the rule rather than the exception. True civilization was as completely unknown to Peter as it had been to his forefathers. He lived grossly and drank immoderately to the end of his days, despite the innovations which he introduced into his country. His interest in European material culture grew originally out of a desire to learn the best methods of building ships for his navy. It had little to do with any desire to change the morals or habits of his people.

No greater contrast could be found than between Peter, the wild barbaric Russian, and K'ang Hsi, statesman and scholar, with a touch of the schoolmaster in his pedantic insistence on details. And yet in one point they agreed. Neither desired war between their respective countries, though for quite different reasons. Peace was essential to both rulers and had it not been for stubbornness on both sides a settlement could have been reached long ago. Neither believed the other to be civilized and they spoke of each other as barbarians. Neither would make concessions to a Power which he believed inferior to his own. Yet the Russians desired peace to consolidate and colonize their immense new territory of Siberia. The Chinese needed peace to deal with an enemy in another direction.

War had recently broken out between two of the Mongol tribes allied to China ; the king of the Eluth Mongols had broken away from his allegiance to the emperor K'ang Hsi and had attacked the Kalkas, a Mongol tribe living on the borders of Russia, close friends and allies of the Manchus. The emperor wished to support the tribe which had asked for his protection and to do so effectively peace with Russia was essential. Otherwise he would have the Muscovites fighting on the side of the Eluths, and a minor tribal war might assume international proportions. Calden, the king of the Eluths, had risen to power through assassination. If he were to become overlord of all the Mongols he would be in a position to menace the Chinese empire itself.

The difficulties which surrounded a meeting of envoys coming from Peking and Moscow were very great from a

geographical point of view. Immense distances must be traversed on both sides before a place acceptable to both parties could be reached. The route to be followed was difficult and dangerous. Months, even years might pass while the envoys were still on the road. The Chinese delegation would be forced to travel through a part of the Gobi desert and through country where the Mongol tribes were already at war. The Russians had the Siberian snows to contend with, the swollen rivers of spring when the ice melted, and the great primeval forests untouched by the axe of the woodcutter. Even to arrange such a meeting took an indefinite length of time, as the swiftest and most dependable couriers often perished on the way.

The language barrier was another difficulty to be overcome. Long before an actual meeting had been arranged, the Jesuits took charge of the negotiations. They insisted that all communications be written in Latin, as no Russian spoke Chinese and no Chinese spoke Russian. The Mongolian language might have been used because it was known to both parties, but had that been permitted the Jesuits would have had no opportunity to direct proceedings. When many of his letters remained unanswered and a succession of couriers failed to return to Peking, K'ang Hsi became impatient. It was then that he ordered Father Grimaldi to travel to Europe as his ambassador with letters to be forwarded to the Czar.

The Jesuits as well as the emperor were unaware of the state of illiteracy at the Russian court. They did not realize that only by chance could someone be found to read and translate their elegant Latin epistles. They agreed with K'ang Hsi when he guessed shrewdly that Siberia must be inhabited by thieves and criminals who robbed and murdered his couriers.

"It is impossible these letters have all miscarried," the emperor stated in an edict to his people. "It may be that the Russians at Yaca and Nerchinsk belong to the criminal class and cannot go home on that account." (2)

A courier eventually found his way from Moscow to Peking, bearing dispatches which informed the emperor that the Czars Ivan and Peter, animated by a sincere desire for peace, deplored the resumption of hostilities between the two countries and were sending an ambassador to

negotiate. The emperor was only too willing to meet the peace proposals half way. The situation on the border had grown worse instead of better. Not long before the arrival of the courier, Chinese soldiers had razed the Russian fort at Yacsa and carried off a number of prisoners, who when brought to Peking were well treated and allowed to form a colony of their own. But that was not the end of the matter. The Russians retook the fort as soon as the Chinese troops had retired and rebuilt it. From the standpoint of the emperor all the work must be done over again.

This was the reason why K'ang Hsi was anxious for a quick solution of the problem, which would remove the necessity of sending another expeditionary force to the north. He hastened to appoint Prince So-san, a high Manchu official, to represent him at the coming meeting with the Russians, while two Jesuits, the Fathers Gerbillon and Pereira, were ordered to accompany him as interpreters. Despite his short residence in China, Gerbillon had sufficiently mastered the Manchu language to be of invaluable aid. So highly did the emperor think of the ability of both Jesuits that his representatives were instructed to make no decisions without their approval.

On the Russian side, Theodor Alexievitz Golovin was chosen to represent the two youthful czars. Golovin, the son of the governor-general of Siberia, was a strong supporter of Peter and therefore in opposition to the regent and her candidate, the idiot Ivan. He may have been appointed envoy to ensure his absence from Moscow during the coming struggle, when the rival ambitions of the two brothers were fought to a bloody finish. His mission to the Chinese border would take several years to accomplish and would keep him out of the way. He was provided with an escort of fifteen hundred soldiers, commanded by four colonels.

Doubtless the pleasure-loving Golovin, one of the few Russian-born companions of Czar Peter, did not relish the idea of such a long banishment from the debaucheries of Moscow. A few years later he reaped the reward of his exile when, as one of the ambassadors of Czar Peter, then sole ruler of the Russian empire, he travelled about Europe on a mission which made tongues in every country wag, because Peter accompanied him disguised as a gentleman in his suite. The journey had been arranged for the purpose

of giving the czar an opportunity to study shipbuilding in Holland. His disguise became an open secret, much to his own annoyance, and caused no little embarrassment to the rulers of the countries through which he passed.

Nerchinsk, a town on the border between Russia and China, had been selected as the place of meeting of the envoys of both countries. After a last interview with his friend Peter, Golovin threw himself in his sledge and resigned himself to months of monotonous travel. He had yet to learn that it would be three years before the actual meeting took place. His party was obliged to travel as a self-supporting unit, because supplies could only be obtained at irregular intervals along the route. There were no inns except in the principal towns and for that reason the sledges were fitted like travelling rooms with windows and beds, and were heavily laden with provisions. On the road nothing could be obtained except eggs and milk, bought from the inhabitants of an occasional smoke-filled hut. When the snow melted the sledges were abandoned and the party continued on horseback. Fresh mounts were difficult to acquire, therefore the pace was regulated by the strength and endurance of the horses. On the rivers boats were used if possible, sometimes makeshift crafts, hastily constructed while the party rested. During the months passed on the road, the only incidents that broke the monotony were those which added to the dangers of the journey, such as when the horses were obliged to swim a swollen river or when the route was blocked by fallen trees.

The Chinese delegates made a gallant attempt to reach the border but were unsuccessful. The ambassadors with their escort travelled for several months through difficult country, where the dangers of the desert were increased by the chance of being caught between the hostile tribes of the Eluths and Kalkas. As the party progressed the difficulties increased, until they were overtaken by a messenger from the emperor ordering them to return to Peking. K'ang Hsi had received news of the fighting among the Mongols which made him fear for the safety of his mission. While Golovin and his escort wasted many months in Siberia, the Chinese expedition returned to the capital to wait until a second attempt could be made at a more propitious time.

X

THE TREATY OF NERCHINSK

The Chinese ambassadors made a second attempt to reach the Russian envoys in June, 1689. This time they succeeded. At Nerchinsk, the place of meeting, a treaty of peace was signed of an international importance out of all proportion to the magnitude of the dispute under discussion. This was not because war between China and Russia was averted, although that was the direct result of the agreement. It was due rather to its being the first pact of modern times to be terminated between China and a Western Power. On the borders of Siberia, in a roughly built small town, which had been hurriedly constructed of wood and was inhabited by lawless, half-savage men, China was brought through this treaty into the community of Western Powers.

Without the intervention of Europeans the treaty never would have been concluded. The negotiations were conducted on behalf of the Chinese by the two Jesuit priests, Gerbillon and Pereira, aliens to those they served in religion and race. With Golovin, the Russian envoy, were several foreigners, including Adam Brand, a young Hollander. On both sides peaceful Westerners who had never handled a sword used their influence to restrain and instruct the delegates of two immense countries, brought together for the first time for the mutual advantage of both. In the long history of the Chinese people the treaty of Nerchinsk holds a significant place. It inaugurated the beginning of a new era : that of co-operation between China and the Western nations.

The party which left Peking to make the treaty was composed of the same men who had been obliged to turn back the previous year. Prince So-san, captain of the life guards and minister of state, was the chief ambassador. One of the emperor's uncles was the second-in-command. These two high officials were attended by sixty mandarins of lesser grades, more than a thousand soldiers and small pieces of cannon conveyed upon the backs of horses. The usual number of servants, luggage, cattle for food, extra horses, presents for the Russian envoys, and ceremonial costumes

were, of course, taken along. The two interpreters, Gerbillon and Pereira, both dressed as mandarins and riding on saddles embroidered with dragons, the parting gifts of the emperor, accompanied the party. They had few illusions as to what lay before them, because they had previously covered the better part of the route. Gerbillon remarked afterwards that compared to the journey between Peking and Nerchinsk, the long and dangerous sea journey to Europe was one of comparative comfort.

It was a great opportunity for the Jesuits and they expected to profit by it. The conversations were to be carried on in Latin and they alone understood that language. They were to conduct the negotiations and what was more they knew that the emperor had told his ambassadors to make no decisions without their approval. Prince So-san was a liberal and just man and he was their friend. Their efforts would have powerful support and the prestige gained by success would be enormous. Father Gerbillon thoughtfully fingered his crucifix. It hung from a chain outside his mandarin's coat and distinguished him from his fellows. He was a younger man than Father Pereira, who rode by his side, but the success or failure of the mission, from the point of view of the Jesuit order, rested upon his shoulders. As the soul of the departed Dalai Lama is supposed after death to enter the body of a new-born child who becomes his successor, so the policies and ambitions of the late Father Verbiest had been inherited by Father Gerbillon, the only member of the Society of Jesus in Peking with the required tact and ability to carry them to a successful conclusion.

The emperor's eldest son rode out from the palace to bid farewell to the embassy. He invited the officials to his tent, erected by the roadside a few miles from Peking, where tea was served from a large gold cup out of which each of the members of the embassy drank in turn before prostrating himself nine times in the direction of the palace. It was a ceremony which expressed appreciation of the emperor's many benefits, not the least of which was sending his own son to wish them a successful journey.

A few weeks later, moving always to the north or north-west, the fields of waving spring grain were left behind and the party entered the sands of the Gobi desert. This stage of the journey was dreaded by all, as water was scarce and

the animals suffered from lack of proper grazing ground. Occasionally, when the party halted for the night, provisions were brought into camp by roving bands of Kalka Mongols, who sold what they could spare, usually a few horses, camels, oxen, or sheep. The poverty of the nomads was extreme. At the best of times they lacked every comfort of life and since war had broken out many of them had been obliged to abandon their herds and take refuge in the desert, where the endless sands protected them from pursuit. The condition of the majority of these poor people was desperate. Knowing this the ambassadors paid liberally for all supplies obtained from them, because it was the emperor's policy to help the friendly nomads by giving them more than the actual value of the cattle received. Payment was made in tea, tobacco, and occasionally silk, the only commodities needed by the nomads, who lived by barter and had no use for gold or silver.

Hundreds of years before cities had been built in the steppe country by Genghis Khan and his sons and grandsons. Korakoram had been for a short time the centre of the Eastern world but now, at the end of the seventeenth century, it had become a heap of ruins. The land was not sufficiently rich to support great cities and the people had preferred a migratory life. Like the Russian peasants, they were lazy and ignorant and only the hand of a master forced them to work. They lived on the milk of their cattle, mixing it with a coarse tea, obtained from China, to which were added small pieces of dried meat ; this mixture was cooked until it resembled a stew. Sour milk was fermented, until it became a powerful and intoxicating beverage with which the nomads drank themselves into a state of insensibility, when overcome with the boredom of their lives.

"They lead a most slothful, lazy life," wrote Gerbillon, disgusted with what he saw of the habits of the natives. "For they do nothing from one year's end to the other but feed their flocks of which they take little care, leaving them day and night grazing on the plains. In autumn they sometimes hunt yellow goats in the open country, or other beasts in the wood. All the rest of the year is spent in their wretched tents, where they dream away their time without reading, gaming, or any other kind of employment except drinking and sleeping." (1)

The wealth of the petty kings or khans consisted of, perhaps, three hundred horses, with oxen, cows, and sheep in proportion ; their authority was extended over a few thousand subjects at most, scattered throughout the desert with four or five families living together in the same place for mutual protection. Each khan received a yearly subsidy from the emperor which enabled him to retain his hold over his people.

When the desert was left behind the party passed a colony of former Chinese mandarins, who had been banished from the empire for one crime or another. The Jesuits were distressed by the condition of these unfortunate men, who were obliged to work at the hardest tasks, cutting wood in the forests or dragging boats up stream against the current of the river. Their dress was slovenly ; their untrimmed hair and beards had turned grey. Little remained to distinguish them from the nomads or to indicate that in former days they had been gentlemen, who had dressed in silk and had taken their places in the suite of the emperor when he rode abroad. Gerbillon realized as he watched them with sad eyes, that the bridge between honour and dishonour was a narrow one and that the whim of even the most just of emperors could destroy as well as create.

Before reaching Nerchinsk, the Chinese were greeted by the governor of the town, who came out to meet them attended by ten other Russians.

"A mean sort of people, clownish and somewhat barbaric in their behaviour," reported Father Gerbillon.

They were all dressed in the Russian style, with wide trousers tucked in at the tops of their boots, loose vests of a coarse woollen stuff and coats which buttoned up on the side. Their interpreter, an Eluth Mongol of the tribe hostile to K'ang Hsi, was a rough man of little education. His presence filled the Jesuits with uneasiness because this was the first indication they had had that there might be difficulty in confining the negotiations exclusively to Latin.

The military strength of the Chinese alarmed the Russians. They thought that a formidable expedition had arrived equipped for war. Besides the soldiers, who had accompanied the ambassadors from Peking, three thousand more had made the voyage down the river, starting from

the province of Liao-tung. They came in great galleys, which could be propelled by either sails or oars, but which were more often pulled along the shore by men struggling on the banks. The Chinese delegates had at their disposal, when these troops arrived, between four and five thousand men; they pitched their tents and settled down to await the arrival of the Russian ambassador, who for reasons best known to himself had seen fit to delay his departure from his former camp.

Each of the Chinese officials had not only servants but camels and herds of his own. The governor of Nerchinsk watched them with increasing uneasiness.

"They have acted," he said, "as if they came not to treat of peace but to make war and ravage the country; they have posted themselves about the fortress and being asked what their intention was answered they had no account to give, but would go where they pleased." (2)

"On the second of August a messenger appeared from the Russian ambassador," recounted Father Gerbillon. "He was a young man of about twenty-three years of age and had sense enough and seemed to be well-bred. He was attended by ten persons, besides an interpreter who had all something wild in their air and seemed to lack breeding." (3)

It was the uncouthness of the Russians which surprised both the Chinese and the Jesuits. They had been unprepared for such rough and mannerless men. All that they saw and heard increased their distrust of their opponents. The Chinese ambassadors did not believe the Jesuits when the latter told them that the person of an emissary was sacred according to international law. Even a brave man like Prince So-san seldom ventured far from his tents without his escort. The rising tide of suspicion and distrust on the part of the delegation from Peking during the eighteen days of waiting for Golovin to arrive, made the Jesuits fear a complete breakdown of the negotiations. It seemed impossible that a conference could be successful when so much ill feeling prevailed.

When Golovin and his escort finally appeared the Chinese ambassadors were obliged to cross the river to meet them. This they did with extreme reluctance fearing an ambush. They crossed the river attended by all their officers, dressed in state robes made of gold or silver

brocade ; before each mandarin was carried a brightly-coloured silk umbrella and in the hands of the officers were ceremonial pikes or imperial banners. With slow and stately steps, the Chinese envoys proceeded to the tent assigned for the meeting, passing on the way through rows of gaping yokels who had never seen anything like this procession before.

The Russian envoy rode to the meeting at the head of two hundred and fifty men. Drums and fifes accompanied him. He, too, was dressed in court costume which consisted of a vest of gold brocade over which was a cloak lined with fur.

"The finest and blackest sable I ever saw," commented Gerbillon with a Frenchman's eye for details, "which at Peking would yield a thousand crowns."

Although a short, corpulent man, Golovin managed to give the impression of dignity and ease. He was not the least embarrassed either by the situation or the impenetrable faces of his opponents ; the hazards of life at the Russian court had taught him to face any situation with a certain imperturbability. Siberian wolves were to him far less dangerous than a czar in a bad temper.

Under the plain linen tent the ambassadors of both countries took their seats on two long wooden benches facing each other, the members of the Chinese delegation sitting on cushions which they had brought with them as a matter of course. On either side of their ambassadors were the Fathers Gerbillon and Pereira, watchful and self-possessed. Their previous training had taught them to repress any signs of emotion and nothing in the expression of their faces indicated that what they observed made any impression on their minds.

Elaborate greetings were exchanged through the interpreters before the meeting settled down to business, when both sides commenced by demanding far more than either hoped to obtain. The Russians wished to make the Amour River the boundary, but to this the Chinese would not agree. They laid claim to a large territory on the far side of the river which contained forests where the Kalka Mongols had formerly hunted. The Russians would not consent to such a proposal. When the conference broke up it was with a marked coolness on both sides.

There had been trouble over the question of interpreters. The Russians had insisted that the negotiations should be carried on in the Mongolian language, while the Chinese, fearful that every proposal coming from the Russians would place them at a disadvantage, hesitated to use Latin, a language which they did not understand. The Jesuits were annoyed because they found their authority diminishing and their opportunity slipping through their hands. A second conference on the following day was no more successful. Coolness gave way to open hostility and the Chinese returned to their own side of the river determined to pack up their tents and make off. For a few days longer negotiations continued with no better results. Each side was unwilling to admit that war was the only alternative and yet neither was willing to make any concessions to the other.

Father Gerbillon waited patiently until he was certain that a deadlock had arrived. Then he asked for an audience with Prince So-san, the chief of the Chinese mission, and begged permission to attempt a settlement by himself. When it was granted Gerbillon with trepidation in his heart, but with a trade agreement in his hand, made his way to the tent of Golovin. Despite his agitation he had presence of mind to carefully observe the tent which he found "neatly fitted up and set off with Turkey carpets and two Persian rugs, one of silk and gold which was used to cover the table on which were his papers, his ink-stand, and a very neat watch".

Golovin was pleased to see the Frenchman. They were both courtiers and, although one was a priest, each understood the other's point of view. Gerbillon was convinced by this time that the Russians desired to trade with China and had no real wish for additional territory. This they would not admit for fear of "losing face". He was also aware that Golovin was in a precarious position. Should hostilities break out the Chinese troops far outnumbered those at the command of their opponents and in addition the Mongol tribes on both sides of the frontier would rise to the support of the Manchu emperor, as the Mongols, like the Manchus, were Buddhists and followers of the Dalai Lama. All the advantages were with the Chinese but the Russians would be the last to admit it. Gerbillon knew that such a situation required great tact, but there was no reason why it could

not be settled amicably by two men of the world, especially if they had a bottle of French wine before them on the table.

It was in this way that the disturbing question of the border was finally arranged after a couple of hours of discussion. When Golovin learned that the Chinese were not only willing but eager for Russian caravans to trade with Peking, he agreed to relinquish any claim to the territory which they demanded. Late that same evening Gerbillon returned to his camp taking with him proposals which gave to both sides exactly what each one wanted.

"I returned with this agreeable news to our ambassadors," he remarked later, "who expected me with fear and impatience. But when they understood how happily the negotiations had succeeded, everyone was filled with joy."

He had reason for pride because alone and unaided he had concluded one of those rare treaties in history which are equally acceptable to both of the parties concerned.

Prince So-san, who had dreaded to return to Peking without a treaty of peace—the price paid for failure by a Chinese general or diplomat was high—was willing that the emperor should know of the important part played by Gerbillon in concluding the negotiations. The result would be increased prestige for the Jesuits and greater opportunities to spread their religion in China. As the Russians, too, were pleased the Fathers might even obtain the desired entry into forbidden territory. Fears and suspicions were forgotten as Gerbillon and Pereira worked far into the night drawing up a document which was to confine the boundaries agreed upon.

In the treaty the frontier was arranged according to the wishes of the Chinese. The fort at Yacsa was to be demolished and its garrison retired to Russian territory. Political prisoners, escaping over the border, would in future be sent back to their own country for justice. Border raids would be severely punished. In return for these important concessions the Russians received permission to trade with China. The status of their merchants was strictly defined and a house allotted to their use in Peking. The trade agreement as such seemed of little importance to the Chinese. As the prestige of their emperor had been maintained they regarded the treaty in the light of a victory.

When the final document was copied out in Latin,

Russian, and Manchu, so that all the delegates could read the words to which they were about to add their signatures, a great meeting was held. For the last time both sides turned out in ceremonial garments, the jovial Golovin in his matchless sables, the Chinese with their umbrellas and stiff robes of brocades. In the presence of all the treaty was solemnly read aloud, signed, and then sealed with the seals of both nations.

“After this the ambassadors, rising all together and holding each a copy of the treaty of peace, swore in the names of their masters to observe it faithfully, taking Almighty God, the Sovereign Lord of all things, to witness the sincerity of their intentions.”

According to the statement of Father Gerbillon, this oath had been insisted upon in advance by the emperor K'ang Hsi, who shrewdly suspected that it would impress the Russians. The Chinese ambassadors, with the help of the Jesuits and following instructions which they had received before leaving Peking, had composed an oath which referred to the God of the Christians as a friend of public tranquillity and as one who stood firmly against all unnecessary shedding of blood.

The Kalka Mongols, who inhabited the lands under dispute, had not been consulted, being too unimportant even to be considered as pawns in this international game of chess. On the other hand, the name of God played an important role in the treaty of Nerchinsk, much as it has in other treaties before and since. The Russians were not supposed to know that such an oath meant nothing to the wily Chinese, who were being polite to a diety in whom they had no belief. They would abide by the treaty as long as it suited them to do so. When they chose to break it such an action would be praiseworthy in the eyes of a follower of the Buddha or a sincere believer in the wisdom of Confucius. Golovin must have realized that such an oath meant nothing, but he was blinded by a vision of caravans of skins making their way to the markets of Peking. Only the Jesuits believed in the sincerity of the pledge. In their eyes it was a real tribute to their God and their joy was deep and sincere.

It was midnight before the meeting broke up and the

ambassadors returned to their respective tents. After the day's work Gerbillon wrote :—

“ We were extremely fatigued, especially myself who had eaten nothing all day, and for eight days had no time to rest or eat except in haste or as it were by stealth, because we were employed both day and night either in going backwards and forwards, translating papers drawn up by the ambassadors on both sides or treating them with ourselves.”

Gifts were exchanged on the following day as was customary. From the Russians came such novelties as a telescope and a looking glass. The presents given by the Chinese were more regal. They consisted of wonderful silks and damasks of gold brocade. Both parties were anxious to start on the long homeward journey, so less time than usual was spent in formalities before the pack horses were loaded and heavy bales lashed to the sides of the patient camels. Before dawn the next day the tents too had disappeared and as the sun rose both the Chinese and the Russian delegates rode away.

Following them with their eyes as they disappeared in the distance, the bearded idlers in the streets of Nerchinsk stood still and wondered what it had all been about. They were not interested, and neither were the nomads who watched through the openings of their tents the passing of so many armed men. It was a matter of indifference to them who owned the lands where they grazed their cattle and the forests in which they occasionally hunted. Peking and Moscow were both thousands of miles away and the chances were that it would be a long time before the ruler at either capital thought of them again.

When the envoys returned to Peking, a great banquet was given for them and among the honoured guests were the two Jesuit fathers, Gerbillon and Pereira. The emperor made much of the important part they had played in the negotiations. He felt that the successful conclusion of the treaty of peace had crowned his own efforts and vindicated his policy. In the following year he mentioned the matter at the end of an edict addressed to his people :—

“ Did not both Manchu and Chinese ministers advise me that the Russians were too far away from China and that the negotiations could hardly by any possibility succeed? But I said : No ! The matter cannot be allowed to stand in this

inchoate stage ; and I sent high officials to act according to my own views, with the result that Russia was at once brought to terms. I am making no vain boast of my own success ; I am not like such as you, getting someone to trumpet every petty little achievement with a view to promotion and reward." (4)

As for the Jesuits, due to their success, they now entered upon what was known as the golden age of their power in China. For a few short years, secure in the esteem and affection of the emperor and increasingly popular with the court, they enjoyed a position of eminence which appeared to be built on a solid foundation.

PART IV

DECLINE OF THE PRESTIGE OF THE WEST

I

L'AMPHITHRITE

DURING the closing years of the seventeenth century Russia was not the only country of the Western world which looked forward to an expanding trade with China. The Dutch East India Company, having traded with China and other countries of the Far East for nearly three-quarters of a century, was making huge profits for its shareholders. In a lesser degree English vessels were slowly but surely bringing Eastern wares to European markets. But it was Portugal which had been the first on the scene ; Portuguese merchants had arrived at Canton as early as 1517. The last nation to profit, so to speak, by Portuguese enterprise was France. Tea, silks, and porcelain had entered France by way of Holland long before the first French ship carried its precious cargo of Chinese goods from Canton to a French port. When *L'Amphithrite* was chartered almost by chance for the China trade, a new era in the history of French commerce had begun.

The Jesuits who had been sent to China by Louis XIV had done much to awaken the interest of the French people in the Far East. Their published letters contained authentic descriptions of the fabulous land of Cathay and it was due to their efforts that the first translations of the Chinese classics reached the West. Drawings and engravings of scenes taken from Chinese daily life were published in Holland and then sold at the French fairs. All this contributed to stimulate a desire for the actual products of a country which appealed strongly to the popular imagination. At the end of the seventeenth century the Jesuits' view of China dominated the European approach to the problem of Oriental civilization ; that is to say, the kindly and benevolent view expressed by the Fathers, as opposed to the unfavourable opinion of traders of a later period. When K'ang Hsi sent Father Bouvet as his second ambassador to Europe the time was ripe for France to take a more active part in the affairs of the Far East.

History does not relate why the emperor chose Father Bouvet for this important mission. Perhaps because there

was no other Jesuit at Peking who was in a position to go. Father Grimaldi had been sent to Italy many years before, Father Thomas was royal astronomer and was occupied at the observatory, and Father Pereira, who was now the chief of the Jesuits in Peking, was obliged to stay at his post. Bouvet was a Frenchman and K'ang Hsi was anxious to send presents and greetings to the king of France, who had previously sent him learned scientists: a form of tribute very much to his taste. The French Jesuits were popular at the court after the treaty of Nerchinsk, when Father Gerbillon had achieved such an outstanding success, and the emperor wished to receive an additional consignment of scientists in return for the gifts which he was sending to Louis XIV.

Father Bouvet was a quiet, scholarly little man who had remained at court ever since he arrived in China with the French mission. He had been appointed tutor to the emperor and had assisted in the translating and editing of many scientific works. He had also written a life of K'ang Hsi, which was published in France, as well as a long treatise in which he attempted to prove that the Christian conception of God was not unknown to the Chinese, but that on the contrary they had worshipped Him since time immemorial under the name of *t'ien*. This was an elastic term usually translated as heaven, which lent itself to various interpretations and the missionaries were not the only ones to seize the opportunity of explaining the meaning of the word according to their own interests. In character Father Bouvet was pleasant and gentle and always ready to oblige others except when it was a question of his religion. Rather than compromise with his conscience he was prepared to endure torture.

Although the emperor's opinion of Europe was frankly sceptical, he admitted that it produced a type of savant which was indispensable to him and that China had much to learn from Western science. When shown a picture of a European house he observed thoughtfully:—

“What a small and miserable country Europe must be if there is no room to extend the cities and the people are obliged to live up in the air.”

He felt that he was getting the best that an alien civilization had to offer when the Jesuits came to his court. The

presents which he sent to the French king reflected his personal opinion ; they were of a literary character rather than articles of luxury and included forty-eight volumes of translations of Chinese works magnificently bound and printed at Peking. In his mind the emperor reasoned that "a small and miserable country like Europe" would certainly have no use for the luxuries which were indispensable at a great court like that of Peking. The Russians had received far richer and more costly gifts. Even a minor Mongolian prince would have been honoured in a more substantial fashion, but K'ang Hsi thought that the French Jesuits were true representatives of their country and he knew that they would prefer the handsome volumes to gold or silver or rich silks.

In his book on the life of K'ang Hsi, Father Bouvet refers modestly to the part he played in the emperor's schemes.

"I will leave it to others to tell," he wrote, "how honourably I was treated by the governors of the provinces through which I passed at the time when I received special instructions from the emperor to go into France and how it acquired me so extraordinary a reputation throughout the eastern parts (even among the enemies of our nation) is scarce to be credited." (1)

Father Bouvet left Peking in the year 1693 with the rank and escort of an ambassador. He travelled as the personal representative of the sovereign to whom every mark of consideration and respect is shown. Although he is silent as to his own impressions of the journey, he could not have been insensible to the honours he received. From other sources we learn that he had a courtier's appreciation of royal bounty. In common with the majority of the saints, he was not exempt from the foibles of human nature, one of which was a keen eye for commercial advantages. Like his compatriot Father Gerbillon, he was capable of computing the cost of his enemy's clothing even at a moment of extreme danger.

When he arrived in France he was surprised and disappointed to discover that his mission was not regarded as of any especial importance. His own countrymen were inclined to be doubtful of his status because he carried no letters from the emperor to the king of France and the

tokens indicating his rank, which had served as a passport in China, were neither understood nor appreciated in his native land. When questioned in regard to his lack of credentials he said that it was the custom for a Chinese monarch to send greetings by word of mouth.

When Louis received him in audience with none too great a cordiality, Father Bouvet tactfully refrained from mentioning the fact that K'ang Hsi regarded the French king as a minor barbarian ruler and his former delegation of Jesuits as a novel form of tribute. To conciliate Louis, he painted a glowing picture of the friendly relations existing between the two countries, emphasizing the esteem in which Louis himself was held by the emperor of China. Louis was not especially interested. He was not impressed by the Chinese volumes which Bouvet had brought with him, even though they later found a place in the royal library and formed the nucleus of the important collection of Chinese works available to students in Paris at the present day. He lent a deaf ear when he was requested to charter a ship to transport a second mission of French Jesuits to China. Perhaps the exchequer was low and the king felt he had spent sufficient money on a gamble which so far failed to secure other than spiritual returns.

Father Bouvet had hoped for a better reception. There were many members of his order anxious to accompany him to China but the difficulty lay in finding a vessel to carry them. Bouvet, in common with all the Jesuits at Peking, was anxious to improve the means of communication. While Father Gerbillon attempted to open up a route to the West through Siberia, Bouvet had come to France equally determined to improve the lot of those who were obliged to travel by sea. Having failed with the king he addressed himself to the directors of the *Compagnie des Indes Orientales*, whose vessels had for some years gone as far as Siam. Through this medium he met a man by the name of Jean Jourdan, who was interested in the idea of direct trade with China from a purely commercial point of view.

Bouvet had the necessary persistence to carry a project through to the end, while Jourdan had the money with which to finance the venture. Between them they obtained the necessary permission from the *Compagnie des Indes*

Orientales to charter a vessel for the China trade. When it was granted in 1698, Jourdan bought from the French government the frigate *L'Amphithrite*, a ship of historic importance, because it was the first French vessel to make the long voyage from France direct to Chinese waters.

The following year the vessel sailed from Brest. On board were Father Bouvet, six French Jesuits on their way to China for the first time, and the artist Gherardini, who became the first foreign portrait painter at the court of Peking. Gherardini preceded Father Rippa, who wrote an account of his experiences in China like so many other of the Roman Catholic priests, and he in his turn was followed by the famous artist Castiglione and later still by Father Attiret, court painters at the time of the emperor Ch'ien Lung. All these artists painted the different campaigns of the Manchu emperors, their hunting expeditions and the *fêtes* which they arranged for the people. Reproductions of these pictures and engravings were popular in Europe during the eighteenth century. They became a form of propaganda for the products manufactured by the Chinese.

Direct trade between France and China having been established, *L'Amphithrite* was quickly followed by other ships, and twenty years later a great maritime company was founded to finance the prosperous and growing China trade. Because of its porcelain and silks, Cathay, the legendary home of mystery and romance, became the inspiration for the styles of the eighteenth century in France. Chinese designs were copied or adapted by the artists of the Roccoco period until no drawing-room was considered complete without the exotic figure of a Chinese mandarin, inevitably holding an umbrella, painted on the wall or on a screen. "Chinoiserie" was a word coined in France to designate a multitude of decorative objects, often of doubtful value.

The French Jesuits in China were of the greatest assistance to the European traders because they were free to travel about the country. Foreign merchants themselves were confined to Canton, where they were obliged to purchase what goods were shipped there from the interior. Being ignorant of the relative value of the different products offered to them, they had to turn to the Jesuits for advice.

The latter, because of their long sojourn in the country, had the necessary knowledge of what was rare and beautiful from the Chinese point of view. They willingly gave their assistance ; they wanted articles of superior quality shipped to France, not because they desired to make a profit for the merchants, although this was the direct result of the lucrative trade which sprang up, but to awaken in France an interest in China so that men and money would be forthcoming for their own work.

The results were not quite what they had anticipated. No one was more surprised than the Jesuits when China set the fashion for France. They never imagined that the products of a country where life was predominantly planned for the gratification of the men and where women held a subordinate position should, on the other side of the world, appeal so strongly to the ladies, who robed themselves in the multi-coloured silks, delighted in the fragile porcelain, and for whose benefit French artists created an imaginary Chinese world to decorate their drawing rooms.

This world bore much the same resemblance to the original as did the "Petite Trianon" of Marie Antoinette to a genuine rustic cottage, or as "Le Hameau", where she played at farming, resembled a true French village. However, it was all delightful, charming, and piquant and had the advantage of being new. La Pompadour herself was an enthusiast when it came to things Chinese and the wits of France gathered in her boudoir to discuss Chinese culture. For her benefit Robert Martin created graceful bird and flower designs against a background of dark lacquer and with such happy results that Voltaire burst forth in "Les Tu et les Vous" :—

" Et les cabinets où Martin
À surpassé l'art de la Chine." (2)

The hardy Manchu nobles, gnawing their half-cooked meat as they squatted round a camp-fire after twelve hours in the saddle, would hardly have recognized the country they had conquered had they contemplated the reflection of the original as created by the artists of France. And K'ang Hsi himself with his love of a joke would have been amused, if a little horrified, had French art *à la Chine* been brought to his attention. It follows that the sordid side of

the story, the uncouth manners of the elder Manchus, the cruelty, the refined methods of torture used in China so that the victim would suffer the last possible moment of agony, had not been stressed by the Jesuits, who had described a courteous, ceremonial, well-ordered country ruled over by an emperor who was the personification of wisdom and justice. It was this imaginary ideal, this Utopia of the Jesuits' creation, which turned out to be the inspiration of France.

As early as the seventeenth century, importations from China had caused changes in European life. The closed palanquin had been brought from the Orient and was known as the Sedan Chair. Later it was mounted on wheels and developed into the *chaise*. In the form of the *chaise* it eventually returned to China as a gift from a king of England to the emperor Ch'ien Lung. The sedan chair became extremely popular in the countries of its adoption and contemporary literature refers to the number of chairs and their bearers outside the churches and theatres. Great ladies travelled in them from town to country. It may have been a slow method of transportation but it was an extremely fashionable one.

Tea brought about other innovations and gave an indirect stimulus to the China trade. When the beverage was first introduced the question arose how to serve it. As suitable tea services were only manufactured in the Orient, there remained no alternative but to import them. Unfortunately Chinese cups were made without handles. The ladies of France needed handles to protect their delicate fingers from the heat of the tea. Because of this sudden demand Chinese potters were encouraged to change their ancient methods of production and create tea-cups with handles. This was one of the reasons why certain porcelain objects were manufactured in China exclusively for the foreign market. It was a small matter to begin with, but it developed into a great industry and provided an opportunity to dispose of inferior products, as Western barbarians were not supposed to know the difference and could not be expected to have taste.

By the end of the seventeenth century Paris was more than ever the centre of European fashions. Hand-painted silks from the East could be made into the bright-coloured shawls then in vogue. Some years later printed stuffs were

manufactured by the Chinese which were so beautiful that it was difficult to distinguish them from the hand-painted varieties. French manufacturers endeavoured to cater to the growing demand for satins, taffetas, and Indian muslins which when imported brought such high prices in the home market. Silk factories sprang up, stimulated by Chinese competition, and in 1686 the first steps were taken to limit the amount of silk brought from the Orient so that the French merchants might have a chance to sell their own products which, at the time, were inferior. A hundred years later Chinese silks were shipped from France to America, where the ladies of the post-revolution period were developing a taste for luxuries. So it came about that after two thousand years Chinese silks were prized by ladies of taste in all parts of the civilized world, as they had been in the days of imperial Rome.

Even in architecture Chinese designs had an influence on Europe. In Germany several palaces were built with roofs which suggested their Chinese counterparts. In France the nobility built pleasure pavilions or kiosks in their gardens, copied from pictures of the originals, and on the roof of one Parisian hotel there was a small Chinese garden with two bridges spanning an artificial stream. When Kew Gardens, the property of the Duke of Kent, was laid out as the first example of a Chinese garden in the West, a pagoda raised its exotic head above the green trees of the English countryside. Miniature hills which sprang up about its base, decorative piles of rock over which cascades of water descended, and rare shrubs planted in groups, all contributed to create a strange and alien note in landscape architecture. Kew Gardens originated a style which was copied on the Continent and also at Stowe, amid the peaceful surroundings of rural Buckinghamshire.

Trade between China and Europe flourished during the eighteenth century when the world had a balance which it has lacked since the days of China's decline. Great nations in different hemispheres turned to each other for certain forms of knowledge ; each nation had something to contribute, so that the usual attitude of condescension on both sides was mitigated by a mutual feeling of respect. The East turned to the West for instruction in the sciences. The West turned to the East for porcelain and silk. These two

opposite poles of thought and feeling were kept in touch with one another by sailing vessels, struggling with wind and tide as they beat their way through vast and lonely oceans. Frail ships though they were, they were manned by daring and courageous men whose efforts introduced a new chapter in the history of the world—the domination of the East by the West.

II

THE ROMANCE OF PORCELAIN

Of all the products exported from China to the Occident during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries none could compete in importance with porcelain. The delicate colours used in its manufacture delighted the eye, while the many and varied shapes into which it was made gave it a usefulness far beyond anything else imported from the Orient. When porcelain came into general use in Europe, it was found to be no longer a luxury but a necessity. It effected a revolution in living almost as drastic as that which occurred when glass windows were first introduced. There were porcelain objects from China to suit every taste. Painted porcelain, in common with the silks and other precious wares, delighted the great ladies of France. It brought into their homes the suggestion of a luxuriant civilization, while the warm, soft tones, the jewel-like quality of the enamel, and even the occasional hint of gold used in the decoration harmonized with the silks of their gowns and draperies. Farther north, in Holland and England, the blue and white ware, which had become popular in China during the days of the Ming emperors, appealed to the inhabitants of a more sombre world.

The endless stream of boxes and crates containing porcelain objects, which survived the long voyage in the sailing vessels of those days, made the name of the emperor K'ang Hsi more famous in Europe than all the tales of his wisdom, his just laws, or his interest in Western science. In any of the great museums of the world to-day fine specimens of porcelain can be seen which were made by gifted Chinese potters working under his direction and patronage. As French furniture is often classified by the name of one or another of the kings of France, so "K'ang Hsi" has become a term used in Europe to designate certain types of Chinese ceramic ware, which include not only examples which are elaborately painted with figures or blossoms, but also monochrome vessels featuring the deep rich colours introduced during his reign.

The name "porcelain" was given to the Chinese ceramic

ware by the Portuguese. When they first reached the East Indies they found the natives using a certain kind of mussel-shells in the place of coins. Because of their shape and colour the Portuguese named them *porzella*, or "little pigs". For the Chinese pottery ware, which resembled the shells, they coined the word "porcelain". In England the same ware was called "china" because the people could only think of it in connection with the country of its origin. French minor poets sang its praises after it reached Europe in verses of questionable merit, such as the following :—

" Allons a cette porcelaine
 Sa beauté m'invite m'entraîne.
 Elle vient du monde nouveau,
 L'on ne peut rien voir de plus beau.
 Qu'elle a d'attraits, qu'elle est fine !
 Elle est native de la Chine." (1)

Long before the days of K'ang Hsi, during the era of the Sung dynasty, the manufacture of ceramics had reached a great height in China. Then it took its place as one of the most important of the arts, worthy to be compared with that of the bronze worker or the jade carver. Potters were rewarded by the emperor and treated with the same respect as were the painters and poets of the period. Sung emperors instituted a system of imperial grants for the potter to give him financial security so that he would not be obliged to work for purely commercial purposes. Under the Sung, monochrome ware reached a perfection which has never been surpassed. The delicate green of the Celadon, which was reported to change colour when it came in contact with poison, was prized alike for its beauty and utility by princes and kings.

The real production of porcelain, as distinct from pottery because it was made of kaolin and china stone, commenced on a large scale during the reigns of the Ming emperors, when cobalt blue was imported from Persia for the first time and the resources of the treasury were strained to pay for it. White glaze and a red glaze made from copper were now produced and under-glaze painting marked the beginning of a new era in the production of ceramics.

All the innovations invented during the Ming period were incorporated in the porcelain produced under the Manchus.

While K'ang Hsi occupied the throne, artists and artisans worked together to extend the scope of the industry ; they invented new shapes and produced painted pottery and glazes of greater variety than had ever been seen before. Ceramics became the chief medium of the artistic expression of the age, painting and sculpture working to enrich it rather than as separate arts.

At the time of the rebellion of Wu San Kuei, during the early days of the reign of K'ang Hsi, the centre of the manufacture of porcelain had been invaded and the imperial factory destroyed. When the question of rebuilding it arose, it was the desire of the emperor to establish the seat of the industry at Peking, where he was then in the process of creating workshops or *ateliers* for the important arts and crafts of the country. Metal work, enamel, jade, and lacquer were among the industries which progressed under his wise rule, for as he would never accept any but the finest *objets d'art* for his personal use the artisans vied with one another to please him.

But for some reason, perhaps because of the poor quality of the available clay, the emperor's project of creating a city of kilns at Peking was abandoned, and he gave the full weight of his support to rebuilding and expanding the industry at Ching-te-chen, near Nanking, where, since the beginning of the Ming dynasty, most of the porcelain of superior quality had been produced. Connected by lakes and rivers with the Yangtse, the products of the city could be shipped by boat to the larger cities on the sea coast.

In or near Ching-te-chen a huge population, estimated at over a million people, made their livelihood in connection with the porcelain industry. Even the crippled and blind among the inhabitants could make a living grinding the colours, which were made from every conceivable material, sometimes even from semi-precious stones. In this city there was work for all ; by reason of imperial grants emphasis could be placed on perfection of workmanship and the object of the industry was never confined to obtaining the greatest profits from the trade.

Chinese sources describe how the emperor's paternal interest extended even to the practical details of the manufacture of porcelain :—

"In the nineteenth year (A.D. 1680) of the reign of K'ang Hsi, the emperor sent an official of the Imperial Household to reside at the imperial factory and superintend the work. Previous to this the first-class workmen had been levied from the different districts of Jao-chou, but now all this was stopped and as each manufactory was started, the artisans were collected and the materials provided, the expenses being defrayed from the imperial exchequer and the money paid when due in accordance with the market price. Even the expenses for carriage were not required from the different districts. None of the proper duties of the local officers were interfered with; both the officials and the common people enjoyed the benefit and the processes of manufacture were all much improved." (2)

The two basic materials out of which porcelain was made, kaolin and china stone, were both to be found in or near the district where the imperial factory was situated. They had to be passed through drastic processes of purification before they were ready to be made into dough-like balls for the potter to mould. The *T'ao Shuo* says:—

"The glaze cannot be made without ashes. The ashes for the glaze come from the department of Lo-p'ing, distant one hundred and forty *li* southward from Ching-te-chen. They are made by burning grey-coloured limestone with phoenix-tail plants." (3)

In preparing the ware moulds were sometimes used for the shapes which required them, but as a rule rounded objects were "thrown" on the wheel. If colour was used under the glaze, it was then painted on the dried porcelain body with a brush. The next process was to apply the glaze, which was done either by immersing the vessel in a tub of liquid glaze or by spraying on the glaze through a tube.

Firing was the supreme test of the potter's art. The glazed vessel was placed into a seggar or fire-case before it was put into the furnace and for three days and three nights the fire was fed with wood. Only on the fourth day, when the oven had cooled, was the potter able to remove the seggar. Many vessels were ruined in the furnace because the firing required much skill. Time and labour was wasted through the application of too much or too little heat.

After the firing the vessel was taken to the sheds of the enamellers, where the over-glaze painting was applied. These decorations consisted of graceful arrangements of

blossoms against a darker ground, or of elaborate figures and landscapes. Some varieties of porcelain were known as *famille rose* and *famille verte*. The colours were the same as those employed in the metal work known as *cloisonné* and a second firing was required, although at a lower temperature, after this part of the work had been finished. If gold was included in the decoration, still a third firing was needed before the vessel was finished and the potter assured of success.

Father d'Entrecolles, a Jesuit stationed at Ching-te-chen, wrote a famous account of the industry, which he sent in the form of a letter to Europe. Referring to the painted pottery, he said :—

“The work of painting the vessel is divided among a great number of workmen. One paints the coloured bands which are to be seen on the top of the vessel, one paints the birds or animals, another the flowers, and still another lakes or mountains. The human figure is usually badly treated. However, certain landscapes and illuminated drawings which are brought from Europe to China, do not permit us to laugh at the way the Chinese themselves portray the human figure.

“In regard to the colours of the porcelain,” continued Father d'Entrecolles, “nothing could be more beautiful than the blue used on the blue and white ware. And of this blue a legend accredits its discovery to a Chinese merchant shipwrecked on a desert island who found on a deserted coast greater riches than he had lost. Under his feet were stones in great quantities which when prepared produced the most beautiful azure blue that ever was known. It is sometimes called powder blue.” (4)

Single coloured or monochrome porcelain was very popular in China during the reign of K'ang Hsi. The Manchu emperors liked colour and brilliant objects of decoration. Under their patronage the soft “moon-shades” of the Sung ceramics gave place to new colours such as *aubergine*, turquoise blue, *sang-de-bœuf* and many others. White was always desired because it was the colour used at the court during periods of mourning. Such vessels were finished with the greatest attention to detail ; there were no bright colours to distract the eye from careless work. The finer wares of eggshell thinness were so transparent that

they appeared to be made of the glaze alone. Translucent porcelain inspired the following poem which was written to accompany a service of tea-cups made for presentation to an emperor :—

“ Like bright moons cunningly carved and dyed with spring water :

Like curling disks of thinnest ice, filled with green clouds :
Like ancient moss-eaten bronze mirrors lying upon the mat :
Like tender lotus leaves full of dewdrops floating on the river-side.” (5)

At the New Year lovely jars, known as “ ginger jars ”, were sent by one friend to another as a gift, filled with tea or some rare delicacy. They were usually of a deep cobalt blue, and decorated with blossoms. For the numerous temples huge vases were made, sometimes standing three to four feet high, glowing with jewel-like enamels painted against a background of tender green, a green which compares to the green of the unopened beech leaf in the early spring. In contrast to this green, suggestive of spring and the reawakening of nature, was the dusky splendour of the mirror black glaze which, by reason of some mysterious secret known only to the potters, reflected soft brown lights.

The *T'ao Shou* describes the many different objects that were produced by the potter :—

“ For the library of the scholar there are provided the pallet, the ink rest, the water-pot ; scroll picture mounts, bookstands, and paper-weights ; each adapted for its appropriate use.

“ For holding flowers there are vases varying in height from 2 or 3 inches up to 5 and 6 feet.

“ There are plaques decorated with writing and painting for mounting as screens, slabs for pillows and for inlaying bedsteads, handles for walking-sticks, round bowls like Buddhist alms-bowls, each with the black and white men to fill them, and other apparatus for chess or gobang.

“ Vessels are made for burning incense, censers plaited in a hundred folds or divided by partitions. Some are designed in the form of oranges or of silk bags. They are coloured wax-yellow, tea-green, gold-brown, or the tint of the old Lama books, a solace to the eyes in moments of leisure.

“ For daily use there are turned out rice-spoons, tea-spoons, and sets of chopsticks, candle-snuff receptacles and vinegar pots, washing basins, oil lamps and candlesticks, pillows both square

and round, flower-pots and saucers, round jars with small mouths and large mouths, plates and bowls of all kinds.

"For the adornment of beauty in the inner apartments there are provided ornamental head scratches, hair-pins, and earrings, as well as covered boxes, large and small to hold fragrant scents and cosmetics.

"Finally for tea meetings, for wine parties, and for dinner services, there are made teapots and wine-vessels, bowls and dishes of the most varied form and design too many to innumerate." (6)

As the Chinese themselves looked upon fine porcelain as a work of art and wrote poetry about it, it is not surprising that the reaction to it in Europe was at first much the same and that the delicacy of the product suggested some exotic place of origin. It was impossible at such a distance to visualize the matter-of-fact, practical aspect towards life of the potters themselves who, in common with the rest of their countrymen, were engaged in the age-long struggle to earn their living in an over-populated land.

When the first flush of enthusiasm for the new product had waned, European manufacturers began to realize that the immense sums which were leaving their countries in payment for this beautiful ceramic ware might just as well go into their own pockets. All that was needed to divert the flow of gold was to discover the secret of its production. Many experiments were made, but it was not until 1709 that the first genuine piece of hard-paste porcelain was manufactured in Europe.

The process is said to have been discovered by Boettcher, an alchemist by profession, who stumbled upon the secret by accident while endeavouring to turn base metal into gold. His actual accomplishment proved quite as profitable as if he had succeeded with his original intention and the great industry at Meissen was the direct result of his discovery. In 1714 home-made porcelain was sold for the first time at the Leipzig fair and after a while all the different varieties of the Chinese ware were copied at Meissen, some even painted with gaily coloured oriental scenes.

The prestige of China was growing in Europe, and Western nations vied with each other to imitate the products of a country whose art was so much admired. But soon events were to take place which shattered to its very

foundation the mutual esteem which had been growing between China and the West. The reciprocal sentiments of good will were replaced on the part of China by a steady and swift disillusionment.

The Roman Catholic church by supporting the Jesuits had done all that it could to build up a kindly admiration for Western knowledge and a corresponding respect for Westerners themselves. However, this important work was rendered useless by the quarrels within the church, with the result that obstacles were thrown in the way of the Jesuits and decrees were issued by succeeding Popes which offended the emperor. K'ang Hsi considered this last misguided product of Roman diplomacy to be an unjustifiable interference with his own internal laws. Towards the end of his reign it was not surprising that the Roman Catholic church and the emperor came to the parting of the ways. It was the measures taken by the authorities of the church at Rome which had destroyed K'ang Hsi's belief in the advantages of Western culture.

This controversy was one of the three misfortunes which clouded the last years of the reign of the great emperor. The first was the long war against the Eluth Mongols.

III

WAR WITH THE ELUTHS

Few monarchs have reigned for as many years as did the emperor K'ang Hsi. He came to the throne at the age of eight and he died an old man. It was inevitable that during this long reign several serious disturbances should take place, the first of which was the rebellion of Wu San Kuei. A second rebellion occurred many years later at the close of the seventeenth century when the Eluth Mongols revolted against the emperor. Both of these disasters resulted in wars which lasted over a period of years, but while the former was completely suppressed, the latter began a feud which flared up again at a later period.

Although the emperor was above all a man of peace, studious by nature and delighting in literature and science, he never forgot the welfare of his army. Part of every year was spent in leading his bannermen on great hunts and expeditions. His army was to him like a sword, which must be kept sharp and polished and ready for instant use. Even during the years when the emperor occupied himself with peaceful pursuits the army always received an equal share of his attention. Had this not been so, the revolt of the Eluth Mongols would have had far more serious results.

At the time of K'ang Hsi, the Mongols who inhabited the lands surrounding the Gobi desert were divided into several nations. Chief among these were the Eluths and the Kalkas. The latter inhabited lands north of the Gobi desert near the Russian border, where they were better off than many of their neighbours because in that part of the country many fine rivers watered their grazing grounds. They were friendly towards the Manchus and recognized the sovereignty of the emperor K'ang Hsi, sending him tribute every year in the shape of strong horses for his army and receiving in return yearly subsidies for their princes and khans.

Far to the west, inhabiting the region of the Altai mountains, which through the centuries had been known for its honey and fine pelts, were the Eluths. The vast territory

to which they laid claim extended roughly from the Gobi desert to the Caspian sea. To the north they had migrated into what is now part of Russia and in the south they had penetrated as far as the lands of another Mongol nation known as the Usbec Tartars. The lands of all the Mongol nations had definite boundaries. The nomads could wander where they wished within their own territory, but it was considered an act of hostility to pitch their tents and graze their cattle on land belonging to another.

All the Mongol nations lived in a state of poverty and degradation. They were too lazy to cultivate the soil and for fuel they used the dung of their animals. Their smoke-filled tents contained no comforts or luxuries of any kind. Cities which had been built in former centuries had been allowed to fall into ruin because the nomads preferred a migratory form of life. Occasionally they constructed pagodas and temples, roofed with glazed tiles brought from Peking, to glorify the Buddha whom they worshipped, and his representative on earth, the Dalai Lama. High lamas were, in their eyes, more important than kings. When the lamas took part in local disputes there was apt to be serious trouble, because there were few of these priests so holy that they could not tuck up their skirts and fight lustily and well. The Dalai Lama himself was sometimes drawn into their quarrels and although he never led an army in person, he had many effective methods of signifying his displeasure.

The Eluth Mongols were united at this time under a king by the name of Kaldan, a former monk who had risen to power through a succession of carefully planned assassinations. First he had murdered his brother and later his father-in-law to obtain supreme control of the tribes. The kingdom which he had conquered by these drastic means was poverty stricken and sparsely inhabited. It was no great prize to have won, but to Kaldan it was the first step towards the realization of a greater ambition. Like other nomad chieftains before his day, the road to the south-east beckoned him onward. Wealth and power lay before him had he but the strength and determination to grasp them. The Manchus had conquered the Chinese empire ; Kaldan argued that the Manchus in their turn might be conquered by another people. In his imagination he saw himself seated on the Dragon Throne in the place of the emperor K'ang

Hsi, receiving tribute from every part of the Middle Kingdom.

In his path were the Kalka Mongols with whom his nation was at peace. What would be easier, thought Kaldan, than to turn them into allies and unite the two Mongol nations into one irresistible fighting force. To achieve this desirable result he dispatched the following message :—

“ What greater indignity than from masters to become slaves ? We are Mongols under one law ; let us unite our forces and regain an empire which is ours by inheritance. I will share the glory and fruits of my conquest with those who share the danger. But if there should be any Mongol princes (as I hope there are none) so base as to choose slavery to the Manchus, our common enemies, let them expect to feel the first effect of my arms.” (1)

The Kalka prince who received the message was a prudent man and the communication filled him with foreboding. As an indication of his own loyalty he promptly dispatched it to the emperor K'ang Hsi. His fear was founded on knowledge, because being geographically situated nearer to the court at Peking, he had learned something of the power of the emperor who had made many hunting excursions over his lands. From time to time K'ang Hsi had appeared within his territory accompanied by a large army, with formidable cannon and all the appurtenances of court life, such as drums and musicians, which noisily announced his approach. Kaldan, the Eluth, living in remote lands to the west, might rejoice in his own strength, but only because he was ignorant of the resources of his adversary.

K'ang Hsi took Kaldan's pretensions very seriously. If he allowed the Mongols to unite against him he would have a formidable uprising to face, because if Kaldan conquered the Kalkas, the weaker Mongol nations would shortly be drawn into his net. Vacillation or uncertainty would in the end cost the Manchus dear. The emperor, therefore, determined to support the Kalkas and encourage them to resist the encroachments of their neighbours, while he himself left no stone unturned to bring about the defeat of the Eluths. When the treaty with Russia was concluded he at once turned his attention to the preparations for war.

The first campaign of the Manchus against Kaldan was unsuccessful. The army sent against him was commanded by the emperor's brother, who found the Eluths entrenched in a "camel city". This was an effective type of defence which consisted of ten thousand kneeling camels, each one tethered to the ground by his feet. On the back of each beast was lashed a strong box covered with felt, which offered shelter to those inside the "city" and enabled them to hurl stones, arrows, and other missiles at the enemy in the open. The Manchu cavalry charged against the "camel city", at first without result because the horses were frightened by the smell of the camels and reared, in many cases throwing their riders. The next attempt was more successful. It was made on foot and the bannermen succeeded in breaking through the defences and driving the Eluths back. But the victory was not a conclusive one. Kaldan escaped during the battle with the greater part of his army and although he signed a treaty of peace, in which he promised to retire behind his own boundaries, K'ang Hsi had no confidence in his word. The emperor regarded the campaign as a failure and when the commanding general returned to Peking he was penalized for his lack of success by being deprived of his revenues for the space of three years. It was this indecisive battle which determined the emperor to lead an expedition against the Eluths himself.

When K'ang Hsi left Peking on his long journey to the country of the Mongols, he was accompanied by a vast army, six of his own sons and three of the Jesuit fathers, Thomas, Pereira, and Gerbillon, who were taken away from their duties at the capital to be at hand should the emperor desire their conversation. Only a part of the court went with him. The country through which he would pass was so barren and so difficult to traverse that capable officers were given preference to mandarins, who enjoyed higher positions at home. Besides, the journey was dangerous and the emperor did not wish to risk the lives of his more important officials as they controlled the civil administration of the state.

The expedition left Peking in the month of April, 1696, in the thirty-fifth year of the reign of K'ang Hsi. The weather was fine but cold, too cold for comfortable travelling on the high Mongolian plateau, where icy winds blew

steadily from the north and snow fell late in the season. The party could average no more than fifteen to twenty miles a day. All provisions were carried with them and even before the desert was reached the horses were tired from their heavy loads. As the available pasture was insufficient for the animals and water was scarce, the army was divided into several divisions, each one taking a different route so that all grazing ground and every well of fresh water could be utilized.

The emperor took the road to the north and skirted the desert whenever it was possible to do so. A second division had orders to proceed by the shortest way, directly across the treacherous sands of the Gobi. When the divisions parted company on the thirteenth day of the march an order was issued to the whole army limiting rations to one meal a day. This restriction applied to the emperor and his sons as well as to the soldiers. It was a hardship which he willingly shared with his men. In other ways he encouraged them by his example. Two hours before daybreak every morning the camp was stirring; in the icy darkness the camels and horses were loaded by hands numb with cold, because no fires were lighted until sundown when the one scant meal of the day was cooked.

Discipline was strict in the division commanded by the emperor and any offender was speedily punished for disobedience. Leaving the wells unguarded in a country where the lives of all depended upon the purity of the water was an offence comparable to treason to the state. One night the emperor found that two officers assigned to this duty had neglected to remain at their posts. He ordered them to be beaten, their horses and possessions were divided among the soldiers and they were sent into exile in the north. K'ang Hsi announced that not even his sons would be spared if they disobeyed orders and allowed discipline to grow slack.

The cold was an enemy which the emperor had disregarded. Although late in April it was like the middle of winter. Many of the horses died and all suffered extremely from exposure and the lack of adequate pasture, especially so as the expedition was obliged to spend twenty-five days traversing a portion of the desert. When the sands were reached the servants were ordered to cross them on foot so

that the horses might be spared. If the sand was level travelling was easier, but most of the route lay through hills covered with briars, which had grown to the size of great bushes. The hoofs of the animals and the wheels of the carts sank deep in the sand.

Veteran campaigner though he was, the emperor had not foreseen all the difficulties which lay before him. Two months after leaving Peking, when his division was joined by additional banner corps, it grieved him to see the condition of the horses, emaciated and weak after their long ordeal. He reproached himself bitterly for starting so early in the season. Had he left Peking at a later date more provisions could have been obtained from the peasants, at least during the first weeks on the road. As it was, it became increasingly difficult to purchase fresh supplies. The friendly Kalka Mongols, impoverished and fugitive as many of them were, had neither provisions nor cattle to sell.

At this juncture two of the emperor's sons left the main body of troops to take command of the additional banner corps. Their father watched them ride away with apprehension. It was not a human enemy he feared but the country itself, sinister, implacable and desolate, with only an occasional Mongolian tent in the distance accentuating the loneliness. The great army seemed no more than a speck in a vast overpowering space. In such a land it was easy to believe in gods and devils, malignant spirits and wailing ghosts. The protecting *shamen* of the ancient tribes, with their eagles' heads and magical powers, may well have seemed to K'ang Hsi and his men the logical priests of the desert, more potent than the lama monks who worshipped the Buddha ; an imported deity, while the old gods and the rites of the *shamen* were indigenous to the soil.

But at last the desert with its lingering memories of *shamen* and ghosts was left behind and the army passed into open country, always travelling north or north-west through the territory of the Kalkas. The envoys sent by the emperor to negotiate with the king of the Eluths now returned to the imperial camp bearing a truculent message. Kaldan wished to know why the emperor of China had invaded the country of the Mongols? The envoys told a tale of hardship and adventure. They had been seized by Kaldan who told them they might be put to death at any time. For several

months they had lived in captivity, never knowing whether each day would be their last. When they were released they had been obliged to make the return journey to the emperor's camp on foot without pack animals or sufficient food. Many were ill and all had endured starvation on the way.

Next to arrive at the camp were two officers, scouts who had been sent ahead to reconnoitre. They reported that the vanguard of the Eluth army was not far away. This news cheered K'ang Hsi and the atmosphere of melancholy that had hung over the camp disappeared with the knowledge that the long journey would soon come to an end.

Two days later the expedition passed some great blocks of white marble lying on the ground. Carved on the stone were legible Chinese characters recording that three hundred years before a Ming emperor had passed that way in pursuit of a Mongol tribe. These stones greatly interested the emperor. As a student of history he knew that the nomads had always looked towards China when they thought themselves strong enough to risk an invasion. Many Chinese emperors had been obliged at such times to leave their palaces and conduct costly and long drawn out campaigns before the nomads were finally defeated.

Further on two Eluth prisoners were brought into camp. They were stupid fellows and badly frightened, but they reported that Kaldan had no more than ten thousand men at his disposal. He had not believed that the Manchus would come so far in search of him; however, now that they had come he was ready to fight. His army was well equipped and his men had the advantage of knowing the country. But despite these brave words, and in order to make sure that the emperor was actually present, Kaldan climbed to the top of a small hill from where the yellow tent with the dragon standard was plainly visible. When he had seen for himself the size of the army camped in the plain he fled with his followers the same night.

He had not gone far when he encountered an unsuspected enemy. One division of the emperor's troops had been ordered to march through the heart of the Gobi, a feat which had hitherto been considered impossible. Exhausted and starving, the bannermen emerged from the sands only to cross the path of Kaldan as he fled south. For weeks

they had led their horses through the desert, subsisting on the flesh of dying animals when their provisions gave out. The majority were ill, the remainder hardly able to stand, yet they had sufficient strength to draw themselves up in battle formation at the sight of the enemy. Courage born of despair gave them the power to resist as Kaldan and his men charged down upon them. The bannermen fought on foot because of the roughness of the ground, and their backs were to the desert through which there was no escape.

The tents of the Eluths could be seen in the distance. In those tents were the provisions of which the Manchus were in desperate need. With shields and swords in their hands they hewed their way forward, fighting for food as well as for their lives. Kaldan was forced to give ground before an enemy which resembled an army of spectres. These men seemed scarcely human : their clothing hung in rags about their emaciated bodies, their faces were grey with fatigue, their hair and beards unkempt and matted. Fear entered the hearts of the Eluths. They were a superstitious people and such an enemy seemed to belong to another and more sinister world. For three hours they fought and resisted, then panic took possession of them and they abandoned the fight and raced for the hills. For ten miles the bannermen pursued them, taking no prisoners and killing all who stood in their way. Kaldan escaped with a few followers, but his wife, the beautiful queen of Sungaria, was killed when the enemy pillaged the tents.

Kaldan's tents were filled with treasure and food. The starving men feasted and rested until they were able to join the main branch of the emperor's army, which was no great distance away. To K'ang Hsi they brought relief from the fear of famine and when the flocks and herds of the defeated Eluths were driven into the imperial camp all men, from the emperor to the humblest slave, rejoiced.

K'ang Hsi himself celebrated the victory by giving thanks to heaven. He took no credit to himself for what had happened, believing it due to divine intervention. In an edict to his people he said :—

“ Surely our success was owing to the direction of Heaven which seemed determined to destroy the Eluths, for if Kaldan, instead of attacking us, had retired, our army must have

inevitably perished, being quite emaciated with hunger and fatigue and even unable to join the main body of troops not above forty or fifty leagues distant. But these circumstances rather induced the king of the Eluths to hazard a battle thinking that an army so exhausted might easily be defeated. On the other hand, despair gave new strength to our forces, they carried all before them and completed the ruin of that monarch and his people." (2)

A fugitive without followers, pursued from place to place, Kaldan soon after committed suicide. A year later his nephew took possession of his lands and made terms with the emperor. After the death of Kaldan all the country east of the Altai mountains came under the sovereignty of China, increasing the territory under the dominion of K'ang Hsi by many thousands of square miles. Peace prevailed until the closing years of the emperor's reign when he was forced to send another expedition to suppress a second uprising of the turbulent Eluths.

IV

INTERLUDE AT JEHOL

When he had returned to Peking, the emperor began making plans for the construction of a great palace at Jehol, north of the Great Wall, where he could spend the summers with his family and his court. He had often passed through Jehol on his hunting expeditions and had admired the natural beauty of the country with its high mountains, unspoiled forests, streams, and waterfalls. As the site of an imperial residence it had many obvious advantages because it was only two days' journey from Peking and near the hunting fields of Mulan. The emperor's plans gradually matured but it was not until 1703 that workmen were commanded to leave Peking and move to Jehol in order to construct palaces, pavilions, and parks. During the following eight years thirty-six "beautiful places" were erected, each one having a poetic and suggestive name.

The summer palaces of the Manchu emperors were all built more or less after the same general pattern. There was a vast central building where the emperor lived with his wives and young children and where he held his court. Scattered over a large area were smaller palaces which were used as places of recreation and rest; these were joined together by zig-zag paths or by canals, so that they could be reached either on foot or by boat. In planning the landscape every natural advantage was utilized, and what nature had neglected to provide was supplemented by the skilled hand of man. Rolling hills covered with trees and shrubberies separated the palaces and pavilions, creating a sense of privacy and peace. Pleasant valleys lay between the hills through which the paths ran, arranged in such a manner as to secure lovely vistas for the emperor when on one of his customary walks. At Jehol, where nature needed little assistance from the art of the landscape gardener, natural waterfalls and rushing streams fed the waters of a great lake. On an island in the centre of the lake K'ang Hsi built for himself a pavilion of fifteen rooms, where he could retire when he wished to be alone.

But the emperor's real reasons for building the palace

had little to do with either the beauty of the landscape or the advantages to be derived from the cool summer climate of Jehol. K'ang Hsi was far too economical to have expended such enormous sums of money on a project which would benefit him alone. The site was chosen because it was near to the territory of the Mongols, and the palace was built to impress his vassals with the power and resources of the Manchu dynasty. Having conquered the Eluths and incorporated them in his empire, the emperor knew that it was now more than ever necessary to bind all the Mongols closer to the throne. At Jehol they would be received with the same ceremony as if they had made the longer journey to Peking. There they would see for themselves the treasures of an empire, brought from a distance to beautify a wilderness. Whether they made obeisance before K'ang Hsi, or took part in one of his numerous banquets, or rode in his suite while he hunted the antelope or the tiger—the Mongol princes would be constantly reminded that it was to their own advantage to be loyal followers of their Manchu overlord. Vast lama temples were eventually constructed where the nomads could worship the Buddha with all the ritual customary in a Tibetan monastery. Nothing was either neglected or forgotten which might impress them during their obligatory visits to Jehol.

For the benefit of his Chinese subjects, to whom no hint of his real intention was revealed, the emperor issued a lyrical edict in praise of the site upon which he had chosen to build his summer palace :—

“Jehol where Chin-Shan (the Golden Mountain) rises, where the warm springs run, where the clouds spread out over valleys through which trickle brooks of clear water, where rocky pools and verdure abound, where the rivers are broad and the grass luxuriant, where the breeze is clear and the summer cool, suited to rest and relaxation. Jehol is indeed a spot created by nature for her children.

“Jehol is near the Celestial Capital. To reach it takes no more than two days. It is a wide expanse of lonely country. The choice of this district cannot encroach upon my duties. In harmony with the natural contours of the country, I have built pavilions in the pine groves, thereby enhancing the natural beauties of the hills. I have made water flow past the summer-houses as if leading the mountain mists out of the valleys. To create such beauty is beyond the power of human skill. It is

the gift of nature itself, and causes no expense of carving beams or painting columns.

"With my love for the sublime peace of the forests and springs, I can calmly watch the creatures, the waterfowl playing on the blue water, not fleeing at the approach of men ; the deer going in herds in the evening light ; the eagle circling in the sky or the fish leaping out of the water, one high and one low, according to the laws of nature ; and I can also enjoy the purple distances, or gaze at the vault of heaven which sometimes seems near and sometimes far above me.

"Whether I am wandering about enjoying the view, or resting, my mind is always upon the harvest. Neither day nor night do I forget the lessons of history. For the encouragement of cultivation I pray constantly for full baskets ; for the sake of good harvests I rejoice at the blessed rain which falls at an auspicious time. That, in general words, is a picture of my life in the Summer Palace at Jehol." (1)

From his study on the island in the centre of the lake, many proclamations were issued during the summers that K'ang Hsi spent at Jehol. A period of rest to him did not mean the neglect of his empire. He was constantly thinking of ways and means to cut down expenditures, reduce taxation, and improve the condition of the people. One very warm summer's day, his thoughts turned to the prisoners in the jails at Peking and he wrote :—

"When we go over the frontier (the Great Wall) for the summer visit to the Jehol Palace, which has the reputation of being a cool place, we are still troubled by the heat. We think it must be far worse in Peking. We are always mindful of the sufferings of our subjects. At the moment all under heaven is peaceful, the farmers and merchants are content. But we fear that the prisoners who are lying in prison, in chains or in the cangue, must be sick from the heat. When we think of them our heart is full of pity. We command, therefore, that all the prisoners in the capital shall be treated with great kindness. More ice shall be taken to the prisons. The number of their chains shall be diminished and those who bear the cangue shall be taken out of it. When the summer has passed, the usual routine may be observed." (2)

Like so many emperors before his time, K'ang Hsi wrote occasional poems and inspiration came to him at Jehol, where the country was exceptionally beautiful. The following poem is attributed to him :—

“ O high mountains, that fall towards the green hills,
 O blue streams, lapping against the steep cliffs,
 See the fish calmly follow your steps, and play,
 And the storks sit enthroned on the tall trees.
 See, the monk cannot reach the distant grotto,
 And strangers go astray in the cool forests.
 But I have always loved this spot,
 And am alone with my heart's desire.” (3)

Although the edicts issued by the emperor were forgotten in the course of time, and the poems which he wrote were neglected for those of greater excellence, there was one literary achievement of his which came to be known throughout the empire and which was read as long as the Manchus occupied the throne. This was a collection of sixteen moral maxims known as the “ Sacred Edict ”. It brought K'ang Hsi lasting fame as a law-giver and confirmed his reputation as the father of his people.

The maxims were composed to serve as a guide for the direction of daily life. There was nothing religious or mystical in their character, because they expressed the beliefs of an intensely practical man who saw life as it was and not as he wished it to be. Some of his conclusions must have been reached at Jehol where he had time to meditate and reflect. They were the results of a sincere belief in his own wisdom and a desire to continue to guide his people after his death, either through the mouths of his children or by means of his own writings. The maxims were given to the public during the reign of his son, the emperor Yung Ch'eng, who wrote a commentary on each one and published them as a legacy from his father.

By order of Yung Ch'eng, the Sacred Edict was read aloud in every market place throughout the empire on the first and fifteenth day of each moon, so that there should be no one, no matter how poor or illiterate, who would not have the opportunity of benefiting by his father's words of wisdom. The men who were chosen for this task were those “ whose teeth and mouth were formed for clear and distinct utterance ”.

The first of the sixteen sayings has to do with filial piety, a doctrine in regard to which Confucius has much to say. In fact, the Sacred Edict quotes Confucius on almost every page because the words of the great teacher were in close accord

with those of the emperor. They both agreed that : " filial piety is founded on the unalterable statutes of heaven, the corresponding operations of earth and the common obligations of all people." (4) In the Sacred Edict the duties of the subject to his emperor, the son to his father, the younger brother to his elder brother and the wife to her husband are all referred to, and the suggestion is made that " were all dutiful to their parents, and respectful to their elder brothers, under heaven there would be rest ".

" Respect kindred in order to display the excellence of harmony," is the second edict, and the third contains good advice with reference to avoiding lawsuits : " He who will not wrangle about a trifling offence, the neighbours will proclaim his magnanimity."

" Divination," said the emperor, " is not used for the sake of selecting an habitation, but for selecting one's neighbours." The commentator adds :—

" If you listen to the voice of his Imperial Majesty, and all of you be obedient children and loving brothers, then not only will you during your own life, avoid breaking the law ; but your own children and grandchildren will imitate your good example."

Many of the projects dear to the heart of the emperor were taken up and considered in the remaining edicts : " Give the chief place to husbandry and the culture of the mulberry tree, in order to procure adequate supplies of food and raiment," he wrote before turning to the subject of economy, about which he had much to say. He had cut his own expenses down to one-tenth of the amount spent by the Ming emperors on their courts, and the women of his household had been sent away in such numbers that there remained only one hundred and thirty-four ; a reduction so drastic that it excited the interest of the grand secretaries and other court officials, who presented a memorial to the throne stating that in all history there had never been so few women residing in the palace.

" In clothing let there be no superfluous ornament. In food and drink let there be moderation," continued the abstemious emperor, who practised what he preached. His tastes had always been moderate ; when gifts were offered him, he would accept nothing either rich or costly from the people.

"The scholar is the head of the four classes of the people," proclaimed another edict. "The respect that others show him should teach him to respect himself."

The four classes of the people were the scholar, the husbandman, the merchant and the soldier. Even a warrior like the emperor, who had directed many campaigns, never reversed the order nor gave to the soldier other than his traditional place at the bottom of the list; the least of those who were of real importance to the state.

"From olden times until now eight words have constituted the pillars on which the world rests," continued the emperor expanding the same theme, "filial piety, brotherly kindness, fidelity, sincerity, politeness, justice, moderation, and a sense of shame. If every person possessed these eight virtues there would be no necessity for the law."

Sitting at his desk, overlooking the blue waters of the lake at Jehol, words of wisdom and piety flowed from the writing brush of the emperor. How he found time to write at all was amazing, because the greater part of his day was filled with necessary duties. Besides the usual business of government, which was carried on at Jehol the same as at Peking, there were hunts and military manoeuvres to impress the Mongol princes and foreign ambassadors, while audiences must be granted to countless people who had waited all day to attract his attention. And in the evening there were fireworks for the diversion of the court. On *fête* days the gardens and palaces were illuminated with lanterns, wonderfully wrought into strange shapes and made of different colours. They transformed Jehol until it seemed so wonderful and so beautiful that contemporary writers called it a "fairly place", and said that it surpassed the dreams of its creator.

Horse racing, a sport which the Mongols enjoyed, was introduced at Jehol by the emperor. Every summer the Tartars brought their fleetest and finest runners to compete for the prizes which he offered. This sport encouraged the breeding of fine horses which was necessary because while the Tartar horses could run great distances without undue fatigue, they could not compete with the European breed either in size or spirit. K'ang Hsi was aware of this and, like the Han emperors of ancient days, he would have been willing to send military expeditions into far distant countries

to capture large and strong horses for his army. Horse racing was, therefore, not so much a diversion as a means to an end. In common with the majority of the amusements enjoyed by the court, it was encouraged by the emperor for an ulterior motive and because in reality it was of benefit to the state. As his son wrote of him in the preface to the Sacred Edict :—

“ For sixty years, morning and evening, even while eating and dressing, his only care was to excite all, both within and beyond the boundaries of the empire to exalt virtue ; give preference to each other ; put away illiberality ; and keep engagements with fidelity.”

All his life he was building for posterity, for his children, his grandchildren and his people, and while his sons disappointed him bitterly, he had one descendant who was worthy of him. His grandson, the emperor Ch'ien Lung, was a man of the same force of character and genius as himself.

“ As a boy,” wrote Ch'ien Lung, “ I was allowed to visit Jehol with my Imperial Ancestor. I wandered about peaceful and happy. It was no time of rest, yet it was a rest. In that abandonment fraught with blessing, earth and heaven melted into one.” (5)

During the reign of the emperor Ch'ien Lung, Jehol reached the height of its splendour and importance. He built many additional palaces and temples, making of Jehol one of those marvellous places where the extravagances of the imagination have been transformed into beauty. In the days of his magnificence ambassadors from the West came to Jehol to be treated with courtesy, but with the condescension which a great emperor would exhibit towards the representatives of “ tribute bearing ” kings. Ch'ien Lung, who called himself the ruler of All Between the Four Seas, could not even imagine a rival who could compete in importance with himself.

In those days the high road to Jehol was kept in perfect repair, and rest houses were scattered along the way for the convenience of the emperor and his guests. Between Peking and Jehol there was continuous traffic. Once an ambassador from the king of Great Britain lumbered along the road in a heavy English coach. At another time the litter of the

great Dalai Lama swung from the shoulders of many bearers as he was carried along in state. And a beautiful captive princess was brought from Turkestan and wept with despair as she approached the palace to become the concubine of the emperor. Dutchmen, Russians, Frenchmen, and Japanese mingled with horsemen from far distant Central Asian states, all travelling in the same direction, all going to make obeisance before the throne of the emperor of China.

Those were the days of Jehol's greatness. A greatness which had been established on the firm foundation of peace and economy by the emperor K'ang Hsi. For by his hand "Jehol sprang up, flourished for a hundred years, declined and was abandoned, died and was forgotten". (6) It was a symbol of Manchu supremacy and fell into ruins only with the decay of the dynasty.

V

FAMILY LIFE

Although there were so few women living in the palace during the reign of K'ang Hsi that his ministers expressed their surprise and wrote a memorial to the throne about this unusual circumstance, the emperor was, nevertheless, the father of numerous children. He believed that he could leave his country no finer legacy than the gift of a large progeny, imbued with his own broad-minded ideas and resembling him in intelligence and character. He had so many sons that even the names of many are forgotten and he himself did not know the number of his daughters and grandchildren.

The emperor was a good father in the best sense of the word. He watched over the education of his sons, teaching them what he had learned himself, providing them with the most efficient tutors, and leaving no stone unturned to stimulate their interest in literature and science. Their physical training was much as his own had been. They learned to ride while they were still very young and at the age of nine or ten accompanied him on hunting expeditions. By that time they were expected to have mastered the art of shooting with the bow and arrow and even with firearms.

Yet in spite of all his care and all his efforts, the emperor was unsuccessful. He was a fine ruler and a good general and he brought wealth and prosperity to the empire, but he failed miserably in his desire to pass on his own superior qualities to his children. Not one of his sons developed as their father had hoped. The brawls of these sons, their bad manners, and violent characters disturbed the peace to which he had looked forward in his declining years. In the shadow of repeated family misfortunes the just and tolerant emperor became at times a choleric, vacillating old man, uncertain in his treatment of his children, even grovelling on the ground in a transport of rage. During these periods of indecision he punished one day and rewarded the next. Sometimes he issued edicts which recounted the evil deeds of one of his sons, only to rescind them when the culprit was restored to favour. It has been asserted that he suffered

from epilepsy, although the Jesuits, who had opportunities to know the truth, say nothing about it in their letters. If he did suffer from this malady it would account for much that happened during the closing years of his reign.

Of the mothers of these numerous and turbulent offspring little is known beyond the fact that three ladies were elevated to the rank of empress during his lifetime, while his fourth empress, the mother of his successor, Yung Ch'eng, only received the title after her husband's death. His senior empress had died while giving birth to the son who was known as the heir-apparent for more than thirty years. Her successor died shortly after and was buried at the same time. The emperor's feelings towards these ladies were concealed behind a mask of etiquette ; he always treated them with the greatest respect, but he did not seek their company and never took them with him on his travels after the first expedition to the tombs of his ancestors in the province of Liao-tung. Among his concubines there was one who played the harp extraordinarily well. The emperor would have liked Father Pereira to give her lessons, but he refrained from making the request, as he knew the old man would consider the lady in the light of an illegitimate wife and whenever possible he avoided offending the religious prejudices of the Jesuits. But there was one woman in the palace for whom, so it was rumoured, the emperor had more than the usual ceremonious regard. She is referred to by the French Jesuits as "*la Chinoise qu'il aime*".

The existence of this lady became known when the emperor requested the foreign portrait-painter Gherardini to make a likeness of her. Gherardini had come to China at the close of the century in company with Father Bouvet who had introduced him to the court. His work so much pleased the emperor that he was required to paint two portraits, one of a Manchu lady and the other of a beautiful Chinese woman, whom gossip reported to be dear to the heart of K'ang Hsi. Who she was, or how it came about that a Chinese was accepted as an imperial concubine despite the prohibition against a union between a Manchu and a Chinese, has not been revealed. Under the Manchus it was the custom for the emperor to choose his concubines exclusively from among the daughters of his bannermen.

From a document called the "Secret notes of Peng-chan "

the following translation has been taken. The statement was made by an old man who stood high in the world of letters as well as in the esteem of the emperor and his court. This old man reported that the emperor had said to him :—

“ A man from the Occident has attained in his portraits the supernatural perfection of Ku K'ai-che. He has painted the portraits of two of my concubines in such a manner as to surpass the originals. You are an old man who has served me in the palace for many years. It is not unbecoming that you should see them.”

Then the emperor commanded two paintings to be brought in and said :—

“ This is the portrait of a Chinese lady.” Pointing to the second picture he added : “ This lady is a Manchu.”

The old man died soon afterwards and the truth of his statement was never confirmed by either the emperor or his courtiers, but there is little doubt that the portrait painter whom K'ang Hsi compared to Ku K'ai-che, the earliest and one of the most admired of all the great Chinese painters, was none other than Gherardini, who introduced the technique of European perspective to the court. A letter written by one of the Jesuits at Peking, bears witness to the same tale :—

“ Sr. Gherardini is held in such regard by the emperor at the present that he is at the moment painting the portraits of two women, one a Tartar and the other a Chinese. Father Gerbillon assists him and serves as interpreter between him and the ladies.” (2)

The choice of Father Gerbillon as interpreter was a shrewd one. Polished courtier and man of the world despite his calling, he would have been less shocked than the other members of his order by coming in contact with the ladies of the palace. Another letter from Peking speaks of K'ang Hsi's grief when the son of this Chinese lady died in infancy. Later at Jehol, Father Ripa, who was not a Jesuit, confessed to peeping at her through a chink in the wall and he says that she was hung all over with jewels “ like an idol ”.

In the same way that the first Manchu emperor, Shun-chih, loved the beautiful and mysterious Tung Kuei-fei, so his son appears to have loved another Chinese woman whose antecedents are unknown. It was the third time that such

a legend was connected with the name of a member of the ruling house, because Bochita, the mother of Shun-chih, was reported to have taken a Chinese hunter into her service who became the father of her son, the emperor K'ang Hsi. The latter, always so punctilious in matters relating to court etiquette, broke all precedents when he required Gherardini to paint portraits of his concubines. Thus he established a tradition which was later followed by his grandson, the emperor Ch'ien Lung, who in his turn commanded Castiglione, a contemporary European artist, to paint the portrait of his Fragrant Concubine, as she was called, the lovely Hsiang-fei. (3)

The Jesuits at Peking took great pains to win the friendship of the sons of K'ang Hsi, especially that of the heir-apparent, the son of the senior empress. As a young man he shared many of his father's tastes, having a fondness for Western science and showing an interest in the astronomical and scientific instruments brought from the West. But as he approached his thirtieth year his character seems to have changed and the emperor began to suspect him of wishing to usurp the throne for himself. He was reported to have neglected to show the proper joy when his father recovered from a severe illness, and there was evidence that he indulged in fits of cruelty. When this became known rumours were circulated that he had lost his mind.

The heir-apparent was continually quarrelling with his brothers and his behaviour towards his father showed a great lack of respect for the throne. He was finally arrested and among the many serious crimes of which he was accused was that of flogging important ministers of state, who had remonstrated with him in regard to his unfortunate habits. With the aid of a band of ruffians, he stole the horses sent as tribute by the Mongol princes to the emperor. He was extravagant, a deadly sin in the eyes of his economical father, maintaining a luxurious household which he paid for, when his own resources proved insufficient, with money appropriated from the public treasury.

"When Jung Jeng (the heir-apparent) was a child," complained the emperor in the presence of the court, "I used to teach him that the needs of my privy purse are provided out of the people's life-blood, and that wise economy was essential to good government. But he has

disregarded my teachings and has given the rein to his shameless extravagances and savage violence. If he continues in this way he will surely end by killing all his brothers." (4)

The blow fell in the year 1708. The emperor had been hunting in the vicinity of Jehol when reports reached him of the prince's cruelty towards certain of his subjects. He hastened south and upon reaching the summer palace near Peking he assembled his court about him. To the surprise and consternation of all present he ordered the arrest of his son.

"It was a sad spectacle," wrote one of the Jesuits who was an unwilling witness of the scene, "to see him loaded with irons who had such a short time before walked almost as an equal of the emperor. His children, his principal officers, were all included in his disgrace. A fortune-teller who had often predicted that if he did not ascend the throne during a certain year which had already passed, he would never do so, was condemned to be cut in a thousand pieces, the most terrible punishment devised by the Chinese." (5)

As nothing more extraordinary could happen than the arrest and imprisonment of the heir-apparent, the emperor thought it necessary to inform his subjects of his reasons for taking such a drastic step. Proclamations were issued setting forth the events in the life of the prince from infancy to the present time, making much of his unfilial conduct and his unfitness to hold high office in the state. Of his madness his unhappy father said :—

"Jung Jeng is not a normal being. He sleeps the livelong day and breaks his fast at midnight. He indulges in deep potations and can carry thirty or forty cups of strong spirit without becoming intoxicated. He is in terror of thunder and lightning and even heavy rain alarms him. His behaviour is most eccentric, and he talks a lunatic gibberish. There can be no doubt that he is mad and sore vexed by demoniac possession." (6)

The affair did not end here. Under torture the fortune-teller confessed to having had communication with several other imperial princes, and a strange tale of magical practices was unearthed ; practices which the emperor believed to be directed against his own person. In an edict he announced that the fortune-teller had boasted of his ability to summon at will sixteen flying magicians and had asserted that two of them had already arrived. The emperor

was far too enlightened to believe in the flying magicians, but there was always the danger of poison skilfully administered by some unsuspected hand. K'ang Hsi was deeply disturbed by the thought that his sons were plotting against him. He believed himself to be in constant danger of assassination.

The reference to magic in any case was sufficient in itself to enrage the emperor. He had had a long-standing quarrel with the Taoists, who claimed to have a certain control over the imaginary denizens of the air. Only a Taoist could have invented a story so fantastic and the only reason for taking it seriously at all was because the emperor had believed ever since he came to the throne that the Taoists were plotting against his person.

This sect, which had taken the mystical doctrine of "The Way" taught by Lao-tzu in the fifth century B.C. as a basis for its strange beliefs and magical experiments, had been the hidden force behind the Chinese secret societies. The latter had been a continuous source of anxiety to the Manchus ever since they had conquered the empire. It was the aim of the Taoists and of the secret societies to weaken the dynasty; therefore, they would be most eager to seize upon this quarrel between the emperor and his sons in order to bring about a situation like the revolt of the southern rebels of twenty years ago. To the emperor with his scientific mind and his hatred of superstitions, this trouble came at a time when he was tired and ill and quite unable to support any additional difficulties. The heir to the throne was in prison, heavily guarded, but so suspicious was K'ang Hsi of his other sons that he did not know whom to appoint in his place.

In the Sacred Edict the emperor had freely expressed his opinion of the Taoists, defining their teachings as pernicious under the heading of false doctrines. Of the sect of Lao Tzu he wrote:—

"Lascivious and villainous persons creep in secretly among them; form brotherhoods; bind themselves by oath, meet at night and disperse at the dawn; violate the laws, corrupt the age, and impose on the people."

And the commentary adds:—

"As to the sect of Tao, what they chiefly insist on is the law of renovation, by which they talk of solidifying the quicksilver,

converting the lead, calling for grumbling dragons and roaring tigers ; forming internal and external pills, and I know not what else, with no further object than that of nourishing well the animal spirits ; and lengthening out life for a few years ; that is all. Who has ever seen one of them take their flight upwards in broad day ? It is all a mere farce ! A mere beating the devil. Do but observe these doctors of Tao who, for no advantage, destroy the relations of human life ; they are not worth the down of a feather to society." (7)

The eldest son of the emperor, whose mother was a concubine, was the only one of his children who remained in his good graces. In public edicts he was praised in the same exaggerated fashion as his brother, the heir-apparent had been condemned and reviled. At court it was thought that he would succeed to the position which the arrest of his brother had left vacant, but events developed differently. Evidence reached the emperor that this son, of whom he thought so highly, had been engaged in a plot to ruin the heir to the throne. A strange tale was told of a statue buried in Mongolia with magical ceremonies and astonishing rites by lama priests in the service of the eldest son. The emperor dispatched soldiers to exhume the statue and arrest the lamas. He had now a bitter quarrel on his hands with both the Taoists and the Buddhists. As a result of this latest scandal, the eldest son was sentenced to life imprisonment.

These unfortunate domestic events brought the emperor into a profound state of melancholy. His heart beat so fast and so violently that those about him feared for his life. In his extremity he wished once more to see the heir-apparent, whom he now believed to have been wrongfully accused. When he saw his son standing before him, dressed in the clothes of a criminal and begging for mercy, the emperor himself shed tears and demanded of those about him if he had the right to restore him to his former position.

The court had become weary of this family quarrel. The majority of the ministers believed the former heir-apparent to be out of his mind and that no benefit would come from his restoration to power. They replied coldly to the emperor's question, saying that he was the master and could do as he pleased. A few went so far as to suggest that K'ang Hsi name his eighth son as his successor, as this man was considered the cleverest of all his children. But the emperor

would have none of it and banished from court those who dared make the unwelcome suggestion. Then he restored the heir-apparent to all his former dignities with the usual ceremonies which were a part of such an occasion.

But the strain of the quarrel had been too great for the emperor's declining health. He became very ill and when the Chinese doctors had failed to give him relief, the Jesuits were once more called in to administer pills from Europe and their imported wine. With these simple remedies they were able to relieve his pain and eventually to restore him to health. But they knew it was but a temporary respite. With their vast experience of the care of the sick they had no illusions; it was only a question of time before their skill and efforts would be without avail.

K'ang Hsi's attempts to appoint a successor were unsuccessful. It was not long before the heir-apparent again showed signs of suffering from a mental disorder, so that three years after his reinstatement he was once more degraded and imprisoned. Of the sons of K'ang Hsi, seven died in prison either from poison or other causes.

After the final disgrace of the heir-apparent the emperor refused to name a successor. Of all his sons there was not one whom he considered worthy of the honour. It was only on his death-bed that Yung Ch'eng, his fourth son, was appointed to be the future emperor. This belated choice was made, not because Yung Ch'eng was more worthy than his brothers, but because his cautious nature had kept him aloof from court intrigue.

Even after the death of K'ang Hsi the difficulties caused by the violent natures of his sons did not cease. To their brother, the emperor, they remained a thorn in the flesh as long as he remained on the throne. They were the real or imagined instigators of countless plots, a source of trouble to the country and a considerable and unprofitable expense to the treasury of the state. The heritage of his sons which K'ang Hsi left the empire on his death proved to be a costly one.

VI

THE POPE AND ANCESTOR WORSHIP

Towards the end of his reign K'ang Hsi compiled a secret document which contained instructions for the princes of his family and his confidential ministers of state. In this document he announced in no uncertain terms his real opinion of Westerners :—

“The Russians, Hollanders, and Spaniards, like all other Europeans, accomplish everything they undertake no matter how difficult the task appears. They are intrepid, clever, and ready to seize their opportunities. As long as I live, China has nothing to fear from them. I treat them well, they love me and try to serve me.

“The kings of France and Portugal have taken pains to send me good subjects, clever, well versed in science and the arts, who have well served my dynasty.

“But if our government became feeble, if we had civil war or were invaded by the Mongols what would become of our empire? The Europeans could do with China as they pleased.” (1)

Throughout his dealings with Europeans, during a reign that lasted for more than sixty years, doubts as to their integrity of purpose were always in the emperor's mind. No matter what honours he gave them or what privileges he granted them, some small, half-concealed action on his part often betrayed the existence of a hidden reservation, if not a definite suspicion. Never did he trust them implicitly. From the first he had realized that should they become sufficiently strong to enforce their will upon the Middle Kingdom, trade would provide the excuse for aggression. K'ang Hsi was a student of human nature and he knew the words of the master who said :—

“Men who are greedy of gain in what place does one not see them?”

The quarrel between the various sects of the Roman Catholic church, which came to a head at the beginning of the eighteenth century, fed the emperor's suspicions. It was, he thought, but the prelude to an attack upon his own

authority. When the Pope dared to question his interpretation of the Chinese rites of ancestor worship, and expressed opinions contrary to his own as to what should be allowed to take place within the borders of his empire, he felt that his previous distrust of Westerners had been justified. That was why the struggle over the Chinese rites assumed an international significance. It began as a question of dogma and it ended in a test of strength between two powerful rulers, the Pope and the emperor, both jealous of their own dignity and both determined to decide all questions of policy within their respective spheres of influence in their own way.

Among the Europeans who had rendered the emperor outstanding services were the Jesuits. As long as they continued to do so he allowed them definite liberty of action within prescribed limits. Like the Mongols who roamed at will over a certain area, but who were guilty of aggression should they pass over the border into their neighbours' grazing grounds, so the Jesuits were free to practise their faith and make converts as long as they did not interfere with established customs or with the laws of the land. And because of his admiration for the learning and integrity of the Jesuits, and because he numbered many of them among his friends, the emperor extended his patronage to other orders of the Roman Catholic church. In an empire like that the Manchus, where one man had unlimited power and where one man's word was law, to be the friend of the emperor was a very great distinction, desired by many but achieved by only a few. When the Jesuits regulated the calendar, acted as his tutors, and administered to him when stricken by illness, he showed his appreciation by allowing them to widen the scope of their activities. The religion they preached was not his religion but he tolerated it, at times he even encouraged it, because it was taught by those who had served him well.

The progress made by the Christian religion during the reign of K'ang Hsi encouraged the Jesuits in the erroneous belief that it would be accepted one day by the emperor and all his people. Converts came to their churches from every walk of life ; princes of the blood, mandarins, scholars, and great numbers of the people were baptized. On the surface the church appeared to be flourishing ; never had

it been more successful, never had its priests been held in such high esteem. And yet, since the middle of the seventeenth century, a controversy had been raging within the church itself which came increasingly to the foreground as the prestige of the Jesuits declined with the Holy See at Rome. The Jesuits had fought many battles over the question of ancestor worship with representatives of the other orders and with the authorities of the Roman Catholic church in Europe. For more than fifty years their interpretation of this question had been tolerated, but the time had come when their opinion lost weight and that of their opponents gained ground. The result of this dispute was that the problem of ancestor worship divided the Roman Catholic church in China against itself. Ancestor worship was the rock upon which the church floundered and eventually split in two, thereby dissipating the efforts of more than a hundred years and destroying the outstanding work done by the early Jesuits in introducing Western ideas and Western methods to the emperor and his court.

The Jesuits had maintained from the first that the Chinese rites connected with ancestor worship were civil ceremonies and had no religious significance. Father Ricci had taken this stand before the fall of the Ming dynasty and his opinion had been upheld by his successors in the order, because they knew very well that their mission in China would fail unless they accepted this point of view. The Dominicans and Benedictines, on the contrary, objected to Chinese Christians taking part in the worship of the ancestors, saying that such practices were contrary to the teachings of their faith. They deeply resented the tolerance of the Jesuits which they regarded as suggestive of heresy.

During the seventy years that the controversy raged, succeeding Popes first upheld one view and then the other. In 1645 Alexander VII gave the papal blessing to the rites of ancestor worship. A few years later the complaints of the Dominicans caused Alexander's decision to be reversed. And so it went on, one Pope contradicting the opinion of his predecessor.

This lack of agreement on the part of the Popes was largely due to ignorance. They had no personal knowledge of Chinese customs and those who kept them informed as to the significance of the rites differed fundamentally in their

interpretation of this question. The various papal edicts, issued at intervals during the years, reflected the opinions of which ever order happened at that moment to be in favour at Rome. When the Jesuits were represented by powerful supporters, ancestor worship was condoned. When the Benedictines or the Dominicans were the power behind the papal throne, ancestor worship once more came under the ban of ecclesiastical displeasure.

At the time when the dispute was at its height, a M. Maigrot, a doctor of the Sorbonne, was appointed Vicaire Apostolique of Fukien by Pope Innocent XI and charged with the task of examining the causes of this unfortunate discussion on the spot. He was the first of a succession of papal envoys who approached their work in a spirit hostile to the Jesuits. M. Maigrot had not been long in China before he issued on his own authority a manifesto in which he condemned the rites practised in honour of both Confucius and the ancestors.

The manifesto was ill-timed and indiscreet. The Jesuits saw the end of their labours in China should M. Maigrot be upheld by the pope. They knew that the Roman Catholic church could not survive in China if these rites were prohibited and if those who took part in them came under the ban of excommunication. The Jesuits based their opinion on long years of experience and a wide knowledge of the needs of the people among whom they lived. On the other hand, M. Maigrot had only spent a few years in China before issuing his manifesto and he had no tradition of service to aid him. Even his knowledge of the language was discovered to be inadequate when the time arrived for him to prove his point.

The Jesuits had learned many years before that the Chinese Christian who neglected his duties to his ancestors became an outcast from his family. He was no longer accepted as a member of the clan, and as the clan was all-powerful this meant that he was banished from his ancestral home and the lands cultivated by his fathers. He, his wife, and his children were obliged to become wanderers. The entire system of filial piety as taught by Confucius was bound up with the question of ancestor worship, the son acting as high priest at the family altar after the death of the father. Should he fail to perform these duties he was

no longer a filial son, and to be designated as unfilial was in some ways considered worse than to be branded as a murderer, because in the case of a murderer there were often extenuating circumstances. In the Confucian Analects the Master said :—

“ Parents when alive should be served according to propriety ; when dead they should be buried according to propriety, and thereafter they should be sacrificed to according to propriety.”

And again when he was asked how the people could be taught to revere their ruler he said :—

“ Let him be filial and kind to all ; then the people will be faithful to him.”

According to Confucius, who repeated his statements on the subject of filial piety over and over again so that no mistake could be made, the doctrine applied to high and low, rich and poor, with absolute impartiality.

Confucius had not been the originator of this doctrine. Bronze vessels found in the graves of kings who lived a thousand years before his birth prove that ancestor worship was practised in remote antiquity. Confucius reassembled the teachings which had existed before his time and stated them in simple forms which the people could understand. The language which he used was so clear and the rules which he formulated so explicit, that they were comprehensible even to the uneducated.

The wisdom and simplicity of the Confucian teachings had often disconcerted the missionaries. It seemed strange to them that a “ heathen ” should lay continual emphasis on the virtues of service, self-sacrifice, and brotherly love. The story is told in the Analects of a man who once said to Confucius :—

“ What do you think of repaying injury with kindness ? ”

The Master replied :—

“ With what then will you repay kindness ? Repay injury with justice, and kindness with kindness.”

This statement made by Confucius, as well as a number of other sayings attributed to him, approached in the opinion of many the wisdom and understanding of Jesus.

Chinese sons and daughters were taught from childhood to serve their parents. This early training in the home

prepared them for a greater service in later years, service to the emperor and to the state. When the parents and grandparents died they were known as the ancestors. At certain times every year the family brought offerings and placed them before the family altar erected in honour of the ancestors. These offerings consisted of flowers, fruit, vegetables, plants, and silks ; paper money was burned as part of the devotions. Then the eldest son, who was always master of ceremonies, requested that in return for their gifts the ancestors watch over their descendants during the coming year. He asked for health and prosperity for them all, that children might be born to them to carry on the family tradition and that individual members might live to enjoy the blessings of old age. Every spring, and occasionally at other times, the family assembled at the tombs of the ancestors, not in a spirit of sadness but in order to show respect towards those who had once lived with them, who had loved them and cared for them when they were young.

Rituals performed in reverence of Confucius himself were much the same ; they consisted of making appropriate sacrifices, kneeling on the ground and bowing the head nine times as in the presence of the emperor, and listening to music, as music and ceremonies were almost indistinguishable in Chinese eyes. The Master said :—

“ It (music) promotes virtue ; it is an intrinsic part of the way that causes gentlemen to love other gentlemen and makes small men easy to rule.”

And again, he said :—

“ Let a man be first incited by the Songs, then given a firm footing by the study of ritual and finally perfected by music.” (2)

These ceremonies, known as the Chinese rites, were never criticized by the Jesuits ; but the other orders of the Roman Catholic church raised the strongest objections to them. Among their converts the Jesuits numbered many members of the ruling family. What would the emperor say if the edict forbidding the rites of ancestor worship was upheld ? It would mean that the royal converts would have to choose between their religion and becoming outcasts from the imperial clan. The Jesuits knew only too well the choice that would be made. And when the princes and mandarins

left them, would anyone imagine that the humble people would dare to remain within the fold? The same problem of family and clan applied to every Chinese without distinction of class or position. It was a problem which should have been approached with the utmost discretion; but instead, the words of M. Maigrot brought matters suddenly to a crisis.

In desperation the Jesuits turned to the emperor, a step for which they were to receive severe condemnation. In the year 1699 the following petition was presented to him signed by all the Jesuits residing at Peking. It read:—

“We your faithful subjects although originally from foreign lands respectfully beg your majesty to give us instructions on the following points:—

“The learned men of Europe have heard that ceremonies are performed in China in honour of Confucius, that sacrifices are offered to Heaven, and that certain rites are observed in regard to the ancestors. As the learned men of Europe are persuaded that such ceremonies are performed for a reason and being themselves ignorant of their true purpose, they have begged us to inform them regarding the subject.

“We have always believed that Confucius was honoured in China as a maker of laws and that ceremonies were performed in his honour for that reason. We believe that the rites observed in regard to the ancestors were originally conceived in order to demonstrate the affection of their descendants and to commemorate the good deeds which they performed during their lives. As to the sacrifices to Heaven (*t'ien*) we believe it is not the visible Heaven which is referred to, but the supreme master, author, and preserver of the sky, the earth, and all that live thereon. That is the interpretation we have always given to these ceremonies. But as we are foreigners we cannot speak with the same certitude in regard to this important point as the Chinese themselves and we therefore dare to beseech your majesty not to refuse to clarify this subject for us. We await your reply with respect and submission.” (3)

This epistle was read with attention by the emperor. In his reply, he agreed with all the points raised by the Jesuits and confirmed their opinions. His letter was then sent to Rome where it was hoped that it would counteract the influence of M. Maigrot and carry weight with the Holy Father. The result was the contrary. An historian observed that while the report was considered reasonable

by Leibnitz, a Protestant, it was rejected by the Pope, who found it reflected too much the opinion of the court and too little of those who believed in the Holy Communion. The Jesuits were accused of preferring to have the controversy decided by a "heathen" emperor rather than by the successor of St. Peter himself. From the standpoint of Rome, the Jesuits could have done nothing more imprudent than to draw K'ang Hsi into what might be called a family quarrel.

The request did equal harm at Peking. It revealed to the emperor that dissensions and quarrels were taking place within the foreign church. Should the final decision of the Pope be unfavourable to his own views, the future life of the missions in China was likely to be a short one. K'ang Hsi was sure to consider an adverse decision an affront to his own authority and although he was usually ready to compromise on most issues, he could be terrible when his anger was aroused. What made it even more serious for those who incurred his resentment was that he never retaliated immediately. It was his policy to allow his temper to cool before pronouncing judgment, so that it could never be said of him that he punished in a moment of indignation.

And thus it came about, as the seventeenth century drew to a close, that the position of the Jesuits was precarious both in China and at home. In Europe, where their previous actions had often been criticized, they were now accused of having a complacent attitude towards idolatry, a serious crime in an age when questions of dogma were fought to a finish and heresy was still a subject of major importance.

Even in France, where China was so much admired, the quarrel had unforeseen consequences. Le Comte's scholarly work on China was denounced by the Sorbonne because of the too complimentary remarks made about Confucius. Le Comte had had the temerity to suggest that Confucius might well have been inspired by God with the idea of reforming his country and that his life could serve as an example to Christians. Pascal took up his pen to denounce the Jesuits and such was the grace of his style and the power of his wit that his words carried conviction. Before long Pascal himself was considered an authority on the disturbing question of the Chinese rites and his words were

quoted to refute the arguments advanced by the Jesuits, even though he had never been in China and spoke no word of the language.

When the quarrel was at its height men forgot to use their reason and were swayed by their passions. Imposing phrases such as "God's vicar on earth", or the "Will of the Almighty" were used indiscriminately to mask the real issue, which was one of expediency. The question was simple when reduced to fundamentals. It amounted to this : was the Roman Catholic church willing to make concessions in order to continue the work of its missions in China ? The answer, as time was to show, proved to be in the negative.

VII

DOES T' IEN MEAN GOD?

A second question which profoundly disturbed the Roman Catholic world at this time was concerned with the meaning of the Chinese character which was pronounced *t'ien*, and usually translated as "the sky" or "the heaven". *T'ien tzu* meaning "Heaven's Son" being the customary way of referring to the emperor. *T'ien* had been chosen by scholars to signify the Christian God, because there was no other character in the language which lent itself better to such an interpretation and also because the Jesuits, as foreigners, were hardly in a position to invent a new ideograph for the Chinese script.

The interpretation of *t'ien* and the significance of its real meaning caused almost as great a controversy as had the question of ancestor worship. Europeans who were ignorant of the language expressed heated opinions on the subject and, as the prestige of the Jesuits continued to decline in the West, their use of this character to designate God was considered quite as reprehensible as were their other opinions on the subject of the Chinese rites. When Pope Clement XI felt obliged to express an authoritative opinion on the meaning of *t'ien* he merely reiterated what had been told him by the enemies of the Jesuits:—

"When Westerners speak of the Lord of Heaven and Earth, they use the word *deus* which cannot be used in Chinese. Accordingly for a long time foreigners in China as well as the Chinese who had entered the Church used *t'ien chu*. Henceforth we do not allow the use of the word *t'ien*. *T'ien chu* the Lord of Heaven and Earth is the only name to be used. If tablets with other designations have been made but not exposed, they are not to be hung out. If they have already been exposed in Catholic churches they must be taken down and not used." (1)

The translation insisted upon by the Pope was purely arbitrary, because *chu*, which usually signified "master" or "the head of a household", had almost as many other meanings as *t'ien* itself. In time *t'ien chu* came to be recognized as the name of God, the Lord of Heaven, even by the makers of dictionaries, but it was an interpretation which took

many years before it was accepted by the people as a whole. In the beginning, the difference in meaning between the two terms of address was considered so slight that the controversy was ridiculed by scholars. The question of the rites as well as of the translation of *t'ien* would have provided an endless subject for theological discussions had not the opinions of two most important personages been involved. If these two had been in accord, they, the Pope and the emperor, could have swept all opposition before them. But as they disagreed the Pope discovered to his cost that the emperor was not a man who would allow anyone else to dictate to his own subjects.

The efforts of M. Maigrot, the first papal envoy, had not been crowned with success. His manifesto against the Chinese rites had only resulted in fresh trouble. Eventually the Cardinal de Tournon was sent to China to support him, with orders to listen for "the least breath of pagan superstition". As an afterthought he was told to respect the honour and integrity of the Jesuits who, despite the irregularity of their views, had always served the Church with zeal and perseverance in the foreign field.

Unfortunately the Cardinal de Tournon was a man whose good qualities were modified by a narrow point of view and whose understanding was neither penetrating nor profound. Like M. Maigrot, he had been chosen for his piety and enthusiasm for the cause, qualities which the Jesuits knew caused continual trouble for others in foreign lands. The first appearance of the Cardinal de Tournon was not auspicious. In common with all other missionaries who entered the country he was given a Chinese name; often these names were appropriate, usually they were terms denoting respect. But the name given to the cardinal was *To-lo* which had the meaning of "imbecile". This name at once made him ridiculous, and ridicule was a weapon which the Chinese used with skill and deadly sureness. Had the cardinal realized the implications of the name he would have seen at once that his mission was doomed to failure, for only a diplomat, such as Father Gerbillon had proved himself to be at the time of the treaty of Nerchinsk, could have handled the extremely difficult problem which he was called upon to face.

K'ang Hsi received the cardinal in audience with more

than the usual honours accorded to a foreign ambassador. The papal envoy found himself seated upon a rich divan and served from gold plate, while the emperor offered him wine with his own hand. So friendly was K'ang Hsi and so pressing were his attentions that the cardinal had the greatest difficulty in stating his business, which was to request the imperial consent to the appointment of a superior general with authority over all the Roman Catholics in China. Only at the end of the audience was he allowed to present his petition, to which the emperor's reply, although cordial, was far from satisfactory.

"But certainly," he agreed. "Provided that you choose a man who has already served ten years at my court."

This reservation, which confined the choice to one of the Jesuits, did not at all please the cardinal, who was only too ready to suspect their influence behind every move made by the emperor. By the time he had spent a year at Peking he came to the conclusion that he did not know what to believe.

Between his audiences with the emperor and his disputes with the Jesuits, the cardinal pursued with enthusiasm the principal object of his visit, which was to obtain all possible information in regard to the Chinese rites. He spent his time questioning native Christians, using as his interpreters two Franciscans so as to be certain that the replies he received were not biased in favour of the Jesuit point of view. But the Pope did not wait to receive the report of his ambassador. While the cardinal was still engaged in his investigations, he received a message from Rome upholding the opinions previously expressed by M. Maigrot and contradicting those of the Jesuits which the emperor had confirmed in his letter.

"In spring and autumn," wrote the Pope, "at the time of the Confucian sacrifices as well as at the time of the ancestral sacrifices, all who are church members are prohibited from sacrificing or from helping at these sacrifices. They must not stand by, for these practices are superstitious.

"All members of the Catholic church are forbidden to go to the ancestral halls to perform the ancestral ceremonies or serve them." (2)

As this decision was in opposition to the views expressed by the emperor, it was bound to create an embarrassing

situation. No one knew that better than the Cardinal de Tournon. When he received the communication he was afraid to publish it, and for a time only spoke about it in a whisper to those whom he trusted. But despite every precaution the news became known and many besides the Jesuits feared that disastrous results would follow.

Soon rumours of the Pope's communication reached K'ang Hsi. He did not know the details, but he had heard sufficient to judge that the ceremonies which he had defended were condemned by Rome. The subject interested him, not only because he loved discussion and was himself an eloquent speaker, but because he considered that his own authority had been challenged. Confident of his gifts of rhetoric and his ability to confuse an antagonist, he summoned the unhappy cardinal to court and demanded an explanation of the Pope's manifesto.

"I know your religion is pure and holy," he said to the papal legate, "and it is to be hoped that you will be able to propagate it throughout the world. But you make one great mistake. You do not take into consideration the customs and opinions of different people."

The cardinal was in a quandary. It was not easy to stand up and fight for a point of view which differed in every respect from that of the monarch who sat on his throne before him. He knew only too well that should his answer displease K'ang Hsi there was nothing to prevent the emperor from delivering him to the torture. The situation was such that he felt it expedient to make excuses.

"It is difficult for Europeans to extract the truth from Chinese books," he faltered. "I myself have not the necessary knowledge of the language. I know of only one Westerner in China whose learning is sufficiently profound to enable him to explain His Holiness's point of view. I refer to M. Maigrot. If your majesty will permit, I will ask him to speak for me."

Monseigneur Maigrot was therefore called upon to compose a long peroration for the benefit of the emperor. Nothing loath to demonstrate his scholarship, he quoted from texts extracted from the Five Books and the Four Canons of Confucius in order to prove that these teachings were in direct opposition to those of the Faith which he professed. The emperor made no offer to assist with the

preparation of this document, as he might have done had it been written by one of his Jesuit friends, but instead he waited with grim humour for the two papal legates to walk into their own trap.

When the document was presented at court it created a sensation, but not of the kind that its author had anticipated. The resentment of the emperor was aroused by the mistakes and inconsistencies in M. Maigrot's interpretation of the Chinese texts. To test his knowledge of the language with which he appeared to have taken certain liberties, the emperor summoned him to court and ordered him to translate the four characters written over the throne in the audience hall. It was the prelate's misfortune that he only knew the names of two and was unable to explain the meaning of any of the four.

A pretence of scholarship was one thing that the pedantic emperor could not tolerate and his exasperation was so great that everyone feared the result of his anger. It took the form of an imperial decree in which he ordered M. Maigrot to remain within the walls of the Jesuit college, and advised the Cardinal de Tournon to hasten his departure for Europe. On second thought the emperor decided that this treatment was too lenient considering the nature of the offence. M. Maigrot was transferred to prison where he remained chained to the wall until he was hurried on board a ship sailing for Ireland, without having had an opportunity to make any preparations for the journey or to obtain warm clothing to protect him from the weather. Nearly two years later he reached Rome in a chastened and subdued frame of mind.

The Cardinal de Tournon fared considerably worse. He was sent to the island of Macao under arrest and confined in a fortress until he died in the year 1710. It was said that he would have starved to death had it not been for an old woman who secretly found means of bringing him food. During his long imprisonment he received many honours from Rome but these helped him very little as those who sympathized with him and attempted to mitigate the hardships he endured were speedily deprived of their own freedom. The happy days, when the emperor had chosen to smile on the inhabitants of the island and had sent Father Grimaldi there as his ambassador, had passed forever.

The Pope was unable to rescue his emissary, whose imprisonment in Macao created a vague uneasiness in the hearts of all the Roman Catholics in China.

After the arrest of the two papal legates, the missionaries found themselves faced by the unpleasant alternative of obeying either the Pope or the emperor. Those who sided with the Pope found themselves behind the walls of a fortress. Those who did not enforce the papal edict were in danger of excommunication. No one knew what to do and the missions remained in a state of agitation. It was not until nine years after the death of the Cardinal de Tournon, in the year 1719, that Clement XI ventured to send a third papal legate to China to investigate conditions. M. Mazzabarba, who was chosen for this mission, was given the title of Patriarch of Alexandria. He was accompanied by an imposing following, which included four scientists destined for the court of K'ang Hsi.

But neither his title nor his following helped the prelate when he reached Peking. The emperor desired information from him in regard to only one point: had the Pope modified his former attitude towards ancestor worship? When K'ang Hsi found that the latest orders from Rome only confirmed the Pope's previous statement, the prelate was ordered to leave the empire with the least possible delay. The patience of the emperor had come to an end and he decided to act. M. Mazzabarba was ejected from the country and was instructed to take all other Europeans with him.

"In Europe," ironically observed the emperor, "Catholics can worship as they please."

The only exception to this rule was made in regard to the Jesuits who had been at his side for so many years. K'ang Hsi had not the heart to part with them. He allowed them to remain, at peace with him and with their church, on condition that they gave him their word never to return to Europe. Each one who accepted permanent exile was issued a permit. Without such a permit there was no repeal from his decision.

"The church you propagate is neither good nor bad for China," the emperor said in his edict. "And whether you remain or leave will make no difference. When de Tournon

came, he listened to the missionary Maigrot who did not understand, who had no knowledge of literary Chinese and who could not even read. How could he determine the right and wrong of China's moral principles? Westerners are small-minded people. Henceforth foreigners are not to teach in China." (3)

Before M. Mazzabarba's departure, K'ang Hsi granted him several audiences which, however, caused him nothing but embarrassment. The emperor greeted him with a sarcastic smile and directed his biting wit against his unfortunate guest. M. Mazzabarba was at a disadvantage in the matter of language and like his predecessors he did not trust the Jesuits who acted as interpreters. He hardly knew how to answer the emperor's questions and the discussions came to nothing. And yet, despite these difficulties, M. Mazzabarba must have gained the emperor's respect, because on parting with him for the last time K'ang Hsi, to the astonishment of the court, gave him his hand, a sign of esteem which was most unusual. Perhaps the emperor regretted that his long years of collaboration with representatives of the Pope were over. In his eyes the Pope was the most important of the Western rulers, the only one whose power approximated in any way to his own.

In the year 1720, when M. Mazzabarba left Peking, there were three hundred thousand Chinese converts in the country and more than three hundred churches. The churches were now closed and their priests given five days to depart for Canton, there to embark for Europe. The Pope and his legates had won their point but the price they paid for victory was the destruction of the Roman Catholic missions in China. A few years later the churches, once flourishing centres for the propagation of the Faith and of which they had been so proud, were reduced to ruins. With them disappeared the schools in which the rudiments of Western education were taught and where the Fathers gave medical attention to rich and poor alike. And with the abolition of the schools and churches went the downfall of European prestige in China. For many years to come the West was to be tolerated for its strength but never again admired for its integrity and learning.

Long before the end of the controversy, Westerners all

over the empire had suffered from the change in the emperor's point of view. Even the Jesuits at the court were no longer treated with the same respect as formerly. When Father Gerbillon died, despite his considerable services to the country and his personal friendship with the emperor, no orders were given that his funeral should in any way differ from that of the humblest priest. No representative of the emperor walked behind his bier and the indifference of the court was reflected in the apathy of persons who had formerly sought his friendship. Government officials throughout the provinces had been quick to sense the coolness of imperial support and the missionaries found it almost impossible to continue their work in the face of increasing hostility. Only the good will of the emperor had protected them and when that failed the anti-foreign, anti-Christian point of view of the great masses of the people made itself felt.

Had the quarrel between the Pope and the emperor been one which was confined to the question of religion, it would probably have been of little importance. Religions had risen and fallen in China before without international results. But this quarrel had broadened until it had become a contest between the old civilization and the new. K'ang Hsi had judged the West and its scientific achievements largely by the Jesuits who resided at his court. He had found them honest men and extremely intelligent. But when he used the words *hsio jen*, small-minded people, in referring to Europeans, it was an indication of his profound disillusionment.

A letter written by Father Couteux at the time when these events took place states the position in which the Europeans in China found themselves :—

“ I tell you frankly that never again will either the religion or its ministers recover the position which they formerly held with the emperor, his mandarins, or the people. Never can the harm which had been done be repaired. The name ‘ European ’ has become a term of contempt with the court for reasons which I dare not state. The emperor has lost the greater part of the esteem which he formerly had for the West. This fact has become known not only at court but also in the provinces where we have seen a complete change of attitude on the part of the mandarins who formerly gave us much support.” (4)

K'ang Hsi was an old man when the quarrel took place. He was nearing the end of his life and his disappointment was bitter. Following as it did the trouble with his own sons, he felt that those in whom he had placed his greatest confidence had turned against him. This must be taken into account in reading the Sacred Edict, in which he stated for the last time his final opinion of Christians and the religion which they taught ; an opinion very different from his previous statements on the same subject :—

“The sect of the Western Ocean which honours *t'ien chu*, ranks also among those that are corrupt, but because these men understand mathematics, therefore the government employs them. To walk by these by-roads and deceive the people is what the law will not excuse.”

And the commentator embroiders the emperor's theme :—

“Even the sect of *t'ien chu*, ‘the Lord or Master of Heaven,’ who talk about heaven and chat about earth and things without shadow and without substance ; this religion is also unsound and corrupt.”

The words of Father Couteux “never can the harm which has been done be repaired”, proved prophetic. The emperor had allowed the Jesuits at the court to remain in China, possibly because they were in the process of completing a map of the empire, the last important service which they were ever called upon to render him. In the future they were to work under different conditions. During the reign of his son, the emperor Yung Ch'eng, they were subjected to intermittent persecution. Only when his grandson Ch'ien Lung came to the throne did they regain for a short space of time some measure of imperial patronage and then not because they were scholars or highly cultivated men who could make a real contribution to the state, but only because they disclosed an ability to construct mechanical toys and were able to execute elaborate hydraulic projects which pleased the emperor.

After the quarrel between the Pope and the emperor, the Jesuit dream of a Roman Catholic world, with China firmly knit to the West through an identity of religion and interests, was shattered beyond repair. Like all other empires the Jesuits' invisible empire was also subject to

the law of expansion and decay. It could not remain stationary for any length of time. During the seventeenth century Jesuit influence reached the zenith of its possibilities. Early in the eighteenth century the decline began. China had been one of the keystones in the arch of Jesuit power and the loss of China affected the fortunes of the order in every part of the world.

VIII

A RUSSIAN EMBASSY

Confirmation of M. Mazzabarba's arrival in China and the lack of success of his mission was given by an Englishman, John Bell of Antermony, a gentleman in the suite of a Russian ambassador, who was residing at Peking when the papal legate made his historic visit. In his journal John Bell says :—

“ This day arrived in Peking M. Mazzabarba, ambassador from his Holiness the Pope to the Emperor. His retinue was composed of ecclesiastics of different orders and a few servants who were lodged in the Italian convent. The design of this embassy was to inquire into the disputes and misunderstandings that had lately arisen in this country between the Jesuits and the Dominicans ; relating to certain rites annually performed by the Chinese Christians at the tombs of their deceased parents or other relatives. This custom is universal in China from the emperor to the meanest peasant.” (1)

Bell goes on to discuss the dispute in some detail as well as the part played by the emperor ; he ends his account by saying :—

“ At any rate, it must be acknowledged an instance of uncommon condescension for a heathen emperor to interest himself so much in the peace of a Christian church.”

Bell was in Peking all during the time of M. Mazzabarba's visit and he was well aware of the intrigues that were going on. He was a frequent visitor at the Jesuit college, and the Jesuits, on their side, often called upon the Russian ambassador. After M. Mazzabarba had departed from Peking, three Jesuit priests visited the house where the Russians lodged and begged the ambassador to take a member of their order with him when he returned to St. Petersburg by way of Siberia.

“ The reason for this request,” wrote Bell in his diary, “ was supposed to be that M. Mazzabarba having returned to Rome without accomplishing the ends of the embassy ; the emperor who favoured the Jesuits had concerted with them to send Father Nicolai to the court of Rome by the

quickest route in order to represent the state of the affair before Mazzabarba could arrive."

John Bell witnessed many incidents which strengthened his belief that the emperor favoured the Jesuits. Not only were they present at all the audiences which he and his ambassador attended at court, but they gave an entertainment for the Russians which Bell believed to have been paid for, directly or indirectly, by K'ang Hsi. It was a magnificent affair and as Bell said : " It far exceeded what might reasonably be expected from the Jesuits."

During the dinner given by the Jesuits, at which the Russian ambassador was the chief guest, the emperor's own musicians played continually and afterwards a prolonged performance was given by expert jugglers. Of one of these juggler's tricks Bell reports :—

" The roof of the room where we sat was supported by wooden pillars. The juggler took a gimlet, with which he bored one of the pillars and asked whether we chose red or white wine ? The question being answered, he pulled out the gimlet and put a quill to the hole, through which ran as from a cask the wine demanded. After the same manner, he extracted several sorts of liquors, all of which I had the curiosity to taste, and found them good of their kind."

Just before the departure of M. Mazzabarba, Bell called at the Jesuit college and found all his friends absent, as they had gone to attend the papal legate at his final audience at the palace. The only priest who remained behind " was an old gentleman, Monsieur Bouvet, who had formerly written a small treatise entitled : ' Le portrait de l'Empereur de la Chine ' which he had printed in Europe."

Of Father Bouvet, whose untiring efforts had brought about direct communication between China and his native land, who had once travelled with the rank of an ambassador and who had the status of a high mandarin, all that remained was a tired old man dozing in the sun, while his younger and more active associates carried on their unending fight to secure the emperor's goodwill.

John Bell had come to the Orient because of a taste for adventure ; he admits that in his youth he had a strong desire for foreign travel. This desire caused him to leave London in the year 1714 and embark for Russia armed with letters to the chief physician at the court of Peter the Great.

Bell himself had studied medicine, for how long or how short a time he does not say, but in any case his knowledge was sufficient for him to be recommended for the post of surgeon to an expedition about to leave for Persia. After four years in that country he returned to St. Petersburg, only to start off once more on his travels, this time in the suite of a Russian envoy bound for Peking.

Like all other embassies sent out by Peter, the one to which Bell was attached was composed of men of diverse nationalities. The chief of the mission was Leoff Vassilovich Ismayloff, a Russian by birth, who was supported by two gentlemen, de Lang and Grave, the first a native of Sweden and the second from Courland. The fourth member of the party was Bell himself, who travelled in his usual capacity of physician and surgeon, although his rank was the same as that of any other official envoy of the Czar. Peter mistrusted the intelligence of his native Russians, and although he usually considered it expedient to send forth his embassies headed by a man of Russian extraction, he took pains to see that foreigners were included in the party who had a knowledge of the world beyond the Russian border.

This embassy was important because it was the last foreign mission to reach China before the death of K'ang Hsi. The story of the journey across Siberia and of the months which the party passed at Peking are told in the pages of Bell's journal. He was an observant man who had a chance to see all that there was to be seen and his natural curiosity led him to ask questions. Not being one of the emperor's servants, he judged that monarch by European standards and did not surround him with the aura of veneration, which dazzled the eyes of the courtiers and sometimes even influenced the judgment of the foreign priests attached to the court.

The Russians had an opportunity to observe the strange mixture of politeness and contempt with which foreigners in China were treated at the beginning of the eighteenth century. They were lodged in a building which had been set aside for Russian traders visiting Peking and where they could house their caravans while going about their business. It was called the Russian House and consisted of three large courts surrounded by living quarters; the whole was enclosed by a high wall. During the daytime the visitors

were free to go where they pleased. On many occasions they were received by the emperor at the palace with every sign of friendliness. After a banquet the remains of the food would be sent to their lodging in the traditional manner ; that is to say, the dishes containing the food were covered with yellow silk and paraded through the streets by palace officials. Yet despite this very obvious testimonial of imperial goodwill, at night the Russians changed their status : from being the emperor's honoured guests they found themselves in the far less enviable position of being his prisoners. When the sun set, guards locked the great door which pierced the wall surrounding the Russian House and sealed it with the emperor's seal, so that no one, not even the ambassador, could either go in or go out.

On one occasion the ambassador and his suite were invited to attend a banquet given by the chief eunuch of the emperor's ninth son. The rank and standing of the host caused some consternation at the Russian House when the invitation was received. The ambassador felt it beneath his dignity to accept, but the gentlemen of his suite, including Bell, did so with alacrity. Their dignity was never too great to prevent them from enjoying themselves and this entertainment promised to be unusual.

Their hopes were not disappointed. The chief eunuch provided a magnificent banquet for his guests at the house of his master, although the prince himself was not among those present. It lasted the better part of the day and was followed by a theatrical performance. Towards the end, when the guests had drunk much wine and were therefore less likely to take offence, an actor came forward who, according to Bell, " was a European gentleman completely dressed having all his clothes bedaubed with gold and silver lace. He pulled off his hat and made a profound reverence to all that passed him."

" I shall leave it to any one," continued the narrator, " to imagine what an awkward figure the Chinese must make in this ridiculous habit."

Bell does not comment on the insolence of the incident and perhaps he only considered it a joke, used as he was to the gross manners prevalent at the Russian court ; but from the viewpoint of the punctilious Chinese such an affront to

the dignity of a guest was intentional and calculated to the nicest detail.

From Chinese sources we learn what the people of the Middle Kingdom really thought of their Russian neighbours.

"Peter, the great khan," writes a Chinese historian, "was a very pugnacious boy and when he came to the throne his fellow pugilists were all made generals."

It was well known in China that until Peter made his European tour and copied Western methods, the Russians were still a barbarous people. No doubt, had the scene been reversed and the incident of the banquet taken place at St. Petersburg, the Czar's jest at the expense of a Chinese visitor would have been much broader and could quite possibly have caused the latter physical as well as moral discomfort. During the prolonged festivities which went on at Peter's court, almost any excess was tolerated, and the stalwart Czar expected his guests to drink with him cup for cup.

Of the emperor himself, Bell has nothing but good to say. He attended several audiences at one of the summer palaces, the Yuan-Ming-yuan near Peking, which took only two hours to reach on horseback.

"The courts of this palace," he wrote, "are planted with several rows of forest trees about eight inches in diameter, which I take to be limes. The walks are spread with small gravel; and the great walk is terminated by the hall of audience behind which are the emperor's private apartments. On either side of the great walk are fine flower plots and canals."

The first audience which the Russians attended took place towards the end of November, 1721. After their ride from the city, the ambassador and his suite were given fur cushions upon which they sat shivering in the open court among the ministers of state, keeping warm as best they could until the arrival of the emperor enabled them to enter the hall.

About noon a feast was served on "neat little tables covered with fruits and confections, the meat dishes following the sweets". Several dishes were sent to the ambassador from the emperor's own table, particularly some boiled pheasants which Bell remarks were "very agreeable". At intervals the emperor sent for the ambassador and

questioned him through the interpreters regarding the kings of Europe and the condition of their states "with whose power by sea and land he was not unacquainted". Even at this first interview Bell had occasion to observe the emperor's consideration for others, because when the entertainment was over he bade his guests hasten home, saying that the night would be cold.

Many audiences followed the first one and Bell records that the emperor enjoyed conversing with the Russian ambassador and that he talked of peace and war in the style of a philosopher. He emphasized his friendship for the Czar during these interviews and repeated the assurances of his continued regard : assurances which, unfortunately for the Russians, had but small results, because by the time the embassy had returned to St. Petersburg and the Czar had fitted out a great caravan for the Chinese trade, K'ang Hsi was dead and his policy had been reversed by his successor. No longer was friendship with Russia considered of the first importance. The caravan was stopped at the frontier and minor officials prevented the traders from proceeding to Peking.

K'ang Hsi must have had a premonition of his approaching death, because during his interviews with the Russian ambassador he referred several times to the fact that his life was drawing to a close. He spoke of the vanity and uncertainty of human affairs, adding that he was now an old man and by the course of nature would not live long. He desired, so he said, to die in peace with God and all mankind. So impressed was Bell with the kindness and humanity of the old emperor that he says in his journal :—

"I cannot omit taking notice of the good nature and affability of this ancient monarch. He still retains a sound judgment and seemed to me more sprightly than many of the princes his sons."

Bell's opinion of the emperor's many sons was not so favourable. He thought them fat and indolent. The emperor's grandsons on the contrary, he considered to be a fine lot of young men. Modestly dressed, they attended all the court functions. One of these young princes danced before the foreign guests with considerable grace and charm.

One evening the Russians were invited to attend a display of fireworks in the Forbidden City. The emperor sat in a

gallery surrounded by his wives and family while his guests occupied the court beneath. Of this display Bell writes :—

“ There were exhibited many ingenious designs of fireworks which far surpassed anything of the kind I ever saw, though I have been present at performances of this nature at St. Petersburg given by the best artists in Europe.”

Gunpowder, he was told, had been known to the Chinese for more than two thousand years, but until recently had only been used for fireworks.

Of all the festivities to which the Russians were invited during their visit to Peking, the one they enjoyed the most was a hunt which they attended as the guests of the emperor. They left Peking on horseback at one o'clock in the morning and arrived before dawn at the hunting lodge where K'ang Hsi had spent the previous night.

“ As soon as we entered,” writes Bell, “ the good old emperor, who had risen long before our arrival, sent one of his eunuchs to salute the ambassador and ordered us tea and victuals.

The emperor himself was no longer able to mount a horse, but his love of hunting would not allow him to remain behind. He attended the hunt “ seated cross-legged in an open machine carried by four men with long poles on their shoulders. Before him lay a fowling piece and a sheaf of arrows ”. This had been his manner of hunting for some years past. The emperor was not as old as Bell believed him to be, but his age prevented him from taking the active exercise which he had enjoyed in his youth. Yet some of the vanity in regard to his former strength and dexterity remained, because his guests were shown the bow he had used as a young man and which was too heavy and too large for the ordinary man to bend.

During his visit to Peking, Bell must have heard of the map of the empire which the Jesuits had just completed for K'ang Hsi. He may even have checked with its aid the route he had followed during the latter part of his journey from St. Petersburg to Peking. It is even possible that he took a copy of it back with him to Russia, in order to show the Czar how profitable it would be to trade with this vast country with its endless supply of natural resources and colossal wealth, which could so easily replenish the depleted exchequer at St. Petersburg.

IX

MEASURING THE EMPIRE

Of all the tasks undertaken by the Jesuits in the service of the emperor K'ang Hsi, there was none that could compare with their geographical survey of the empire. It was difficult, dangerous and intensely fatiguing ; so much so that several of the Fathers died while the work was in progress and others were taken ill. The project was of much greater extent than any similar cartographic scheme previously attempted in Europe. The territory surveyed was more than 1,200,000 square miles. All this was accomplished in little more than eight years by a handful of Westerners, whose previous training had only partly prepared them for the difficulties they were called upon to face.

As the quarrel over the Chinese rites assumed proportions which threatened to destroy the work of all the Roman Catholic missions in China, the Jesuits, with their usual foresight anticipated the necessity of stimulating the emperor's fading interest in the advantages of Western science. When searching in their minds for a project which would appeal to his imagination, the idea of suggesting a map of the empire occurred to them. On their travels they had been in the habit of collecting geographical material which might be of interest to others or serve as a guide to those who followed them over the same routes. For this reason they had made copious notes of the products of the different provinces, the extent of the rainfall and the condition of the roads, all of which proved to be of benefit to subsequent travellers in China and was also of interest to scholars in the West as it supplemented their limited knowledge of conditions existing in the Orient.

The early Jesuits had not been trained as geographers, but among the priests who came to China with the second delegation of French Jesuits there were men who had been previously instructed in the sciences of measuring and surveying. It was only after their arrival that the importance of adequate maps was suggested to the emperor. The Jesuits at the court told him that such charts as existed were antiquated and out of date, while none had ever

been drawn of Tartary. Maps such as they proposed to make would be of inestimable advantage to him on his travels and military expeditions.

K'ang Hsi welcomed the suggestion and the preliminary work was begun in 1701, when four Jesuits produced a chart of Peking, including the Yuan-Ming-yuan palace and seventeen hundred villages in the environment of the capital. The result pleased the emperor so much that he was anxious to have large maps made of the different provinces of his empire.

Five years later plans had sufficiently matured for the Fathers Regis, Bouvet, and Jartoux to leave Peking with their caravan for the Great Wall, so that they might trace its course from the sea to the foothills of Tibet. Until the survey was completed in 1717, small bands of Jesuits were continually on the road, travelling from one end of the empire to the other. Each band was accompanied by mandarins and native assistants appointed by the emperor to provide food, tents, and means of transportation. As there were never more than six or eight of the Fathers engaged in map-making at the same time, the amount of work which each one had to do was prodigious.

On this first expedition, Father Bouvet was taken ill after two months of travel and was obliged to return to Peking. Undaunted, the others continued without him, measuring the Great Wall to its extreme end by means of regularly divided cords, tracing the direction with a compass and frequently stopping to take solar observations and calculate the exact latitude of the different positions.

It was no easy task which they had undertaken, because the Great Wall straddled the mountains and descended into precipitous valleys. For two thousand years it had stood there, broad, massive and high, protecting the empire from the invasion of northern hordes. On the Wall itself isolated guards gaped in astonishment as they watched the small, solitary figures of the Jesuit fathers with their measuring cords in their hands. Where did these foreigners come from with their oddly shaped eyes and pale faces? At night the Fathers pitched their tents close to the Great Wall for protection. Icy wind, often heavy with sand from the distant Gobi, tore at the ropes of the tents, threatening to deprive them of even this frail shelter. Every morning,

before dawn, they struggled forth, heedless of bitter weather. Each day had its quota of work to be accomplished before darkness descended upon the world. Finally, after long months of continuous travel, they returned to Peking with the map they had made. It measured fifteen feet in length and included all the gates in the Wall and the fortifications built either on or near it.

As the work progressed and other expeditions of Jesuits set forth with their caravans and guides, it was gentle Father Regis who more and more became the guiding spirit of the enterprise. He was a modest, humble man, who suffered from indifferent health, but in spite of this handicap it was he who made the longest and most difficult journeys, never stopping to rest until the whole map had been completed. He covered the plains of Tartary from the borders of Korea to Lake Baikal in the far north and eastward to the deserts of Eastern Turkestan. It was he who surveyed the rugged mountains of Yun-nan and went by boat to encircle the coast of Formosa. The Jesuits themselves were not allowed to penetrate into either Korea or Tibet, so it was Father Regis who trained native helpers to make detailed records of these two countries which he was unable to visit so that these records could later be compiled into maps. Little is known of his life. It was as if his personality was submerged in his calling in order that his talents and great ability could better be dedicated to the service of God.

So great was his modesty, that when he told the story of his travels he was moderate even in the praise of his companions who had worked beside him during the years. Only from the records made by the other Jesuits do we learn of the great difficulties which had to be overcome because Father Regis never admitted that he or anyone else engaged in this work had ever endured hardships or had been exposed to danger. Of the disappointments, the difficulties, the cold of winter, and the burning heat of summer he said nothing; his one concern was the success of the undertaking.

"I can assure you," he wrote to a friend in a letter, "that nothing has been forgotten which was necessary to make a good work. We have visited ourselves all the important towns and landmarks in all the provinces, we

have examined the maps and the records in every city preserved in their tribunals. We have questioned the mandarins and their officers and also the headmen of the villages. We have never ceased to use actual measurements." (1)

Had the Jesuits started out on their geographical survey a few years earlier, their task would have been made easier for them, because then they would have received the unqualified support of the emperor. As it was, his growing distrust of foreigners was extended even to the Jesuits themselves, and the mandarins who accompanied their expeditions and provided their caravans behaved rather more as guards than as assistants.

"The emperor allotted to their service," wrote Du Halde in his *Description of China*, "mandarins both Chinese and Manchu who were instructed to furnish the missionaries with their caravans and escorts. To the missionaries it appeared as if these functionaries were sent with them as much to guard them as to aid them. It was thought that they were there to prevent the Fathers from going where they pleased. In this way the Fathers in spite of their standing with the emperor could never extend their operations as far north as the Russian frontier nor could they reach the Sea of Japan."

In addition to limiting their movements, the mandarins were ever urging them forward, never allowing them sufficient time for lengthy scientific measurements which were necessary to secure the correct estimate of positions. The Fathers were often annoyed by such interference, not for themselves but because they wished the work to be as perfect as their limited equipment would permit. So dissatisfied were they because of the gaps in their knowledge, that when the completed maps were eventually sent to France they were accompanied by a request that they should not be published until a year had passed. With regard to Korea, Father Regis himself wrote :—

"As we had no opportunity of viewing either the sea-coast or the inward parts of the kingdom we do not pretend that the map is complete but only the best that has yet been published." (2)

The compilation of the map was not all that the Fathers accomplished on their journeys. The records they kept of all that they saw added enormously to the knowledge

of China and especially of the remote parts of the empire. Even small details that would have escaped less observant eyes, claimed their attention. And yet they felt they had overlooked much that might have been of interest to others. Du Halde apologizes for their lack of thoroughness when speaking of the question of fish :—

“The great trouble which the missionaries had in settling the geography of the country,” he wrote, “did not allow them time to inquire very minutely into the several kinds of fish which are to be found in the rivers and canals.” He regrets this oversight because it only enables him to mention one or two interesting facts about fish in China. For example, he says :—

“Golden fish are kept in ponds and basins made on purpose near the pleasure-houses of persons of distinction and are of a fine red which looks as if it were sprinkled with gold dust.”

To the careful, methodical Jesuits the colour of the gold-fish, the habits of the sable or the strange properties of some rare plant were just as worthy of observation as the course of a river or the jutting peaks of a mountain. One can picture them crossing some stream by means of a little bridge and stopping in the middle to peer down at the water beneath their feet, or loitering for a few minutes by the banks of a river to talk to an old fisherman dozing in his boat near the shore.

Although they never entered Tibet, Father Regis collected a mass of information about that strange land, while he was waiting for his assistants to furnish him with data for his map of that country.

“In Tibet,” he wrote, “one woman is allowed several husbands who are generally related and even sometimes brothers. The first child belongs to the eldest husband and those born afterwards to the others according to their seniority.”

“Tibet,” he continued, “makes no great figure in history yet it has been a long time known. The Grand Lama resides in one of the finest pagodas a little distance from the city of Lhasa. He sits cross-legged upon a kind of altar with a large and magnificent cushion under him and receives the adoration of strangers.” (3)

The emperor had always been interested in the

geographical surveys made by the Jesuits. Occasionally, on one of his hunting trips, he would pass near the caravan of one or the other of the Fathers, who were taking observations ; he would then stop to talk and inquire about the progress of the work. Nothing pleased the Jesuits more than these rare signs of good will. Away from court his caution was less obvious and his regard more sincere. In one of the Jesuit letters, reprinted by Du Halde, the following account is given :—

“ One day when meeting us in a large valley, where we were measuring the height and distance of certain mountains, the emperor stopped and calling to us at a good distance said in Chinese, ‘ How do you do ? ’ Then he asked us several questions in the Tartarian language concerning the height of the mountains, to which we answered in the same language. Afterwards turning to the lords who were about him, he spoke of us in very obliging terms. He expressed his affection still further, causing victuals to be carried from his table to our tent.”

In 1717, when the records were completed, the Fathers, after having spent more than eight consecutive years on this enterprise, at last returned to Peking. There they assembled all their records into one great map, which was presented to the emperor the following year. Separate maps were afterwards engraved on forty-four plates by Father Rippa, who had come to China to succeed Gherardini as court painter and who was obliged to teach himself the process of engraving to satisfy K'ang Hsi. These maps made by the Jesuits formed the basis for all other maps made of the Chinese empire. They were sufficiently accurate to be of service to surveyors of later generations, who only followed in the footsteps of the Jesuit pioneers with improved instruments and equipment.

And yet this magnificent achievement was criticized in Europe as was all the other scientific work done by the Jesuits in China. Du Halde, who was conscious of this criticism, defends the hard-working Fathers in the following words :—

“ Our map of Tartary, even of the parts nearest to China, is not only new but the first that ever appeared in China or Europe, where it should have been more favourably received by the geographers since they have been forced to compose

their descriptions of the greater part of Asia merely from uncertain reports and memoirs without authority."

Another well-known missionary, Father Gaubil, writing at the time of the death of K'ang Hsi, says :—

" Compared with what was done elsewhere for general maps of countries smaller than China or Tartary, this work can but do honour to the Tartar prince who commanded such a worthy undertaking and assuredly it did not discredit our Fathers."

Of the Jesuits who had been responsible for this survey of the empire, many, like Father Regis, returned to Peking broken in health from years of continual exposure and overwork. K'ang Hsi had seen more than one of his Jesuit friends die in his service. First Father Schall, then that clever and versatile man Verbiest, and lastly Gerbillon, the finest diplomat of them all. And those who had formerly accompanied him on his travels were now too old to leave Peking.

The long reign of K'ang Hsi was drawing to a close. Tired and unhappy from many disappointments, he wearied more easily than in former days, but his mind was as clear and as penetrating as ever ; he was unwilling to relinquish his former strenuous pursuits and it was this determination not to change his established habits that finally caused his death. The curtain was about to fall on the epic of his life, but before it fell one final ceremony took place which was unique in the history of China. Of all the emperors who had ever ruled over the Middle Kingdom, he was the first during the days of written history to live to see the sixtieth anniversary of his accession to the throne. Wishing to observe it in a fitting manner, K'ang Hsi inaugurated the Festival of Old Men.

X

THE FESTIVAL OF OLD MEN

When K'ang Hsi celebrated the sixtieth anniversary of his accession to the throne in the year 1721, ten days were dedicated to pleasure and rejoicing. It was an occasion unique in the history of the Chinese people. In Peking, the city changed in character and during the time that the festivities lasted it resembled a great bazaar. The streets were decorated with coloured banners, stalls were erected where the different corporations could display their wares, and all the while jugglers and strolling players moved about the crowded streets ready to entertain the populace. At night skilful displays of fireworks burst over the heads of the people, forming galaxies of brilliant stars against a background of the dark sky. The climax to the festivities was a great procession in which the emperor's palanquin was carried aloof on the shoulders of sixty bearers and, as a symbol of the Son of Heaven himself, was greeted with every possible sign of veneration.

K'ang Hsi made a preliminary and unofficial tour of the city. For once his love of economy had been curbed and no check had been put upon the expenditure. But the emperor would never admit that either he or his mandarins had had any share in arranging the celebration. On the contrary, he proclaimed that it was all a great surprise to him and that he knew nothing about it in advance.

Of all the events which took place in honour of the emperor's anniversary, the most unusual was the Festival of Old Men. The grandson of K'ang Hsi, the future emperor Ch'ien Lung, was a child of twelve years old at the time. He, too, became a scholar and in his old age he wrote an account of the unforgettable festival which he had witnessed as a boy. His account runs as follows :—

“The emperor, my grandfather, reaching the sixtieth year of his glorious reign, wished to render it memorable in the chronicles of the empire by some distinguished action which should at the same time manifest his tenderness towards his subjects. He summoned an assembly of old men selected from the different orders of the state and in his palace gave them a



THE EMPEROR K'ANG HSI IN OLD AGE

solemn feast at which he himself presided. This ceremony, in the incident of its being in the sixtieth year of a reign, had never before occurred ; at least it is not spoken of in history nor in any other book which has come to my knowledge. Heaven reserved the first honour for my family.

“ My grandfather in order to unite the majesty of the throne with the simplicity of the father of a family, desired all the princes, grandees, and high ministers to assist at it in court dresses with all the display of the highest ceremonial. Those of his sons and grandsons who were still infants were, by his orders, brought to the palace, that they might enjoy with the others the sight of so many venerable old men and thus accustom them betimes to those obligations imposed by humanity towards the aged. I was then twelve years old : I saw all that was done, and how it was done. Those who were ninety years old and upward received their presents from the emperor’s own hands ; the less aged received their’s from officers charged with this duty. Since that time there is an interval of sixty-four years.” (1)

Preparations for the feast began a year before it actually took place, when word was sent to officials throughout the empire to seek out honourable old men upon whom the emperor, who was himself an old man, might bestow his bounty. Never before had old men been in such request, never before had they been so cherished by their families in order to preserve their lives until the great day should arrive. As for the old men themselves, they were so excited at the prospect of becoming the guests of the emperor that all their small ills and ailments were forgotten ; they paraded about the streets as if in the best of health, ignoring a crooked back, a shaking hand, or tottering feet. Their pride returned with the prominence they had assumed in the eyes of the nation and during that year at least they imagined themselves to be once more in the prime of their manhood.

To his officials the emperor had said :—

“ Search out, inform yourselves exactly of all those families in which are found men to whom heaven has granted a course beyond the ordinary age of man. Make me acquainted with the results of your researches, and without waiting for new orders from me begin to make in my name and at my expense bounties to the old men of the villages and hamlets in your respective districts as follows :—

“ To those who have passed sixty years, give five bushels of rice and a piece of linen ; to the octogenarians ten bushels of rice and two pieces of linen. To those of ninety years, thirty

bushels of rice and two pieces of cheap silk ; and to the centenarians fifty bushels of rice and a piece of both fine and common silk. Moreover, I exempt the whole empire from all taxes during the year that is now begun." (2)

At last the day arrived which had been anticipated long in advance and which was desired by so many people. All the old men could not be invited to the palace. Even the spacious courts of the Forbidden City would not hold so many nor could the majority journey far from their homes. This being the case, delegates were chosen from among the four classes of the people so that scholars, farmers, tradesmen, and soldiers were all able to send their representatives to be the guests of the emperor. Some came on crutches, some were supported as far as the gate by relatives, some came guided by others younger than themselves. But one and all came prepared to enjoy to the limit a day which was unique in the history of their country.

At two in the morning the gates of the palace were opened and the old men began to file into the courts. Each one had previously received a ticket upon which was written his name, age, condition, and rank and a description of the standard under which he was to assemble in the first hall of the palace. Checking these tickets with the list of guests prepared by palace officials took a long time, so the old men had been cautioned to be punctual and had been told to enter by the gate nearest to their lodgings in the city. It was a bitterly cold morning. The Jesuits who were bidden to be present shivered with the old men in the frosty air. Even before the ceremonies began many of the guests were overcome with fatigue and retired temporarily to rest.

It was not until after eight o'clock, six hours after the gates had been opened, that the third blow of a gong announced the arrival of the emperor. He took his place on a raised platform before the entrance to his private rooms, whereas his guests ranged themselves in two parallel lines along the gallery before him. From his throne he could see all that went on and was himself seen by all present. With him were his sons and grandsons, while courtiers and mandarins dressed in their finest court garments moved about among the guests.

As soon as the emperor was seated the old men took their

places, squatting upon a carpet spread out on the ground. One small table was placed before every four persons and the feast began. Music was played and the tables were covered with as many dishes as they could hold. Chief among these was the dish of honour, a saddle of mutton brought from Tartary especially for the occasion.

The assembled company began the feast by drinking wine, given to each guest in a small porcelain cup, which he was permitted to keep. The cups were lifted in both hands as high as the head and without speaking each one made a gesture as if urging the others to drink first. Some of the old men were called forward to drink wine with the emperor, who on this occasion, as the host, shared his own vintage with his guests.

There was no conversation during such a feast. All sat and ate in silence until the emperor gave the signal to rise. This was done by the sound of a gong and the music ceased to play. Then, when the tables were removed, a second blow of the gong summoned a troupe of actors, each one wearing two masks, one in front of his face and the other behind his head. Attired in this way it might appear as if they never turned their backs on any one. The play they produced was concerned with the different ages of man ; one actor was a child, another a youth, the third a venerable grandfather. It was highly appropriate for the occasion and seemed to please the guests. When the play was over musicians took the place of the actors, and the high, shrill voices of eunuchs broke into a pæan of praise in honour of heaven followed by a hymn expressing gratitude for the benefits of the day. This concluded the entertainment, which had already lasted for some hours. The emperor retired and the old men rested until each was called forward in turn to receive his gifts.

The presents consisted of small purses embroidered with gold and silver, pieces of silk, an emblematic sceptre made of sweet smelling wood and ornamented with little figures of jade, and a staff of cedar with a dragon's head. Lastly there was the badge of the order of advanced age with the character representing longevity. The character was made of silver, weighing about an ounce and was attached to the recipient by means of a cord of yellow silk, tied with an appropriate knot.

Had each guest received the same presents the distribution would have been more rapid but, as it was, the name of each old man had to be called before his gifts were handed to him. The day passed in this manner and at nightfall the attendants who were engaged in the task had not finished. Those guests who had not yet received the emperor's bounty were requested to return the next day. Even at the end of the second day there remained gifts to be given away, so instead of one day at the palace, many of the old men had three, because only on the evening of the third day had each one received his presents and obtained permission to return to his own home.

This same festival was repeated many years later, when the emperor Ch'ien Lung reached his sixtieth birthday. His admiration for his grandfather, the emperor K'ang Hsi, was so great that he wished to follow his example in all things. When Ch'ien Lung sat upon the elevated throne which K'ang Hsi had once occupied and gazed down upon his venerable guests he spoke to them of the former occasion and said :—

“ My thoughts revert to the time past and recall that happy day when as a young boy I had no anxiety. I profited by the inestimable privilege of sitting at the feet of my august grandfather while he was seated on the throne. I saw all. I heard all. I witnessed all that transpired around him. This is the second time that by the special favour of heaven I enjoy the same spectacle with the same overflowing of heart. Our descendants will no doubt be filled with sentiments of the most tender veneration when they read in history that two emperors of my august family, the grandfather and the grandson, have celebrated the one the sixtieth and the other the fiftieth year of their particular reigns by enjoying themselves in social repast with the entire nation represented by the elite of its old men.” (3)

XI

DEATH OF THE EMPEROR

It was towards the end of December in the year 1722 that K'ang Hsi went on his last hunting expedition. He had gone to one of his favourite retreats, the Garden of Bright Spring, near the Yuan-Ming-yuan palace, to hunt the stag in the great imperial park. The day was bitterly cold. His followers on their horses were hardly aware of the biting wind, but the emperor, seated as he was on a raised platform and carried on the shoulders of four men, felt the whole force of the gale. He alone of all the company was taking no violent form of exercise to keep him warm. Soon the wind had penetrated through his heavy fur garments. The old man felt chilled from head to foot ; his teeth chattered and his musket fell from his trembling hands. Only then did he give orders for the hunt to cease and was himself carried back to the palace.

Such an order was most unusual and the court was in confusion, not knowing what had happened. But the emperor knew that this was the end. With the fatalism of his race he waited for the inevitable. There was no rebellion in the heart of K'ang Hsi. He had done his work well and he believed that whatever god he met beyond the grave would be kindly and would remember the great effort he had made. He gave his orders quietly and prepared for death.

He would not have liked to have his life end differently. Almost to the last day he had been able to follow his usual pursuits. He was in surroundings which he loved, with his children and grandchildren about him. For a short time he lingered. He even rallied for a while and considered taking part in the ceremonies of the winter solstice in the Temple of Heaven. But this desire soon left him and his fourth son was deputed to take his place. The court physicians could do nothing and this time the Jesuits realized that even their skill would not help him. All they were able to do was to give him imported red wine which soothed the wild beating of his heart and eased him as the end approached. His family, his ministers, and the people

of the empire all waited. By means of the invisible communications of the Orient, the news travelled rapidly. From mouth to mouth it spread until all were aware that death hovered over the summer palace of Yuan-Ming-yuan.

Even before the ceremonies of the winter solstice had taken place the sons of K'ang Hsi were summoned to his bedside. From among them he chose his fourth son to be his successor.

"My fourth son is very like me and should make a good emperor," the dying man said.

There was no conviction in the statement. K'ang Hsi knew the characters of his sons too well to believe that any one of them could fill his place. But he was not able to do more. Soon after he sank into a coma and on the 20th December, at eight o'clock in the evening, he died.

The narrative is continued in the diary of Father Rippa, who was acting as court painter at the time of the death of the emperor. Owing to his work he had been obliged to follow the court and was lodged in a house close to the Summer Palace.

"On the 20th of December," he writes, "I was talking after supper with Father Angello in the house of His Majesty's uncle where we reside, when I heard an unusual murmuring noise, as if arising from a number of voices within the palace. Being acquainted with the manners of the country, I instantly caused the doors to be locked, and remarked to my companions that either the emperor was dead or else a rebellion had broken out in Peking." (1)

Curiosity drove Father Rippa out into the cold night air to see what the confusion was about. He climbed to the top of the wall, which surrounded the house in which he lived and from where he could overlook the public road. To his astonishment he saw innumerable horsemen riding furiously away from the palace. Leaving the town by all available roads, they raced through the night.

Leaning over the wall and almost falling into the street with excitement, the good father listened to the conversation of the passers-by. Presently his curiosity was rewarded. He heard someone say that the emperor was dead.

"I was afterwards informed," he continued in his diary, "that when given over by his physicians, he had appointed as his successor his fourth son, Yung Ch'eng, who immediately

began to reign and to be obeyed by everyone. One of the first cares of the new emperor was to have the corpse of his father clothed, and conveyed the same night to the palace at Peking, attending it himself on horseback, followed by his brothers, children, and relatives and escorted by a countless host of soldiers with drawn swords."

The next day Father Rippa, following behind the emperor's funeral procession, left for Peking. It was his intention to call immediately at the palace in company with the other foreign priests remaining in the city, in order to express his sorrow and concern. He found the gates of the palace closed. Neither that day nor the next were they opened, but on the third day after the death of the emperor Father Rippa and his companions entered the palace clothed in the deepest mourning as were all others present. According to his story, the priests took their places among the officials assembled by the gate.

"Some of the missionaries," he says, "after speaking aside with the mandarins followed them through the entrance of the inner palace where the corpse lay and the funeral rites were performed. We followed the others through the gate and entered a spacious court in which we found a vast number of mandarins upon their knees. They were habited in mourning and weeping and from time to time upon a signal from the master of ceremonies, they all at once raised such a howl of lamentations as filled the sky ; after which they performed their prostrations. We were ordered to kneel also, but in a place apart from the other mandarins. In this position we wept with them making the same prostrations. During several days we repaired to the same spot and repeated the same ceremonies."

This was all of the funeral ritual that Father Rippa saw personally, but he received an account from an official of the palace of what took place within the great hall where the body of the emperor lay in state. When the customary libation of wine was made, the president of the board of rites presented a vessel of wine to the new emperor Yung Ch'eng, who poured it into a large golden bowl. At this a signal was given and those waiting outside in the court prostrated themselves and wept aloud.

The traditional offering of paper money was not burned until the body was removed to a place called Chin Shan, or

the Mountain of Gold, outside the walls of the palace. At that time such a quantity of paper was consumed by the flames that the air was clouded with smoke and a grey pall hung over the city ; a symbol, as it were, of the future, because the emperor Yung Ch'eng was by no means the great man that his father had been. He showed himself to be suspicious and vindictive and the annals of his reign contain an unbroken record of quarrels with his brothers and complaints of his domestic troubles. He had been appointed to succeed his father, not because of outstanding ability, but because he had been more prudent than his brothers and had avoided many of their mistakes. Although he reigned only fourteen years, he demonstrated in that short time that in his descendants K'ang Hsi had left the nation a heritage of future misfortune.

Yung Ch'eng was succeeded by his son, the emperor Ch'ien Lung, who for sixty years restored the honour and glory of his House. He was a great conqueror and an equally great administrator, for he had inherited qualities which made him a wise ruler and a far-seeing man. But he was the last of the Manchu rulers to withstand the insidious influence of comfort and luxury on a race of hardy, nomadic people. The sons of Ch'ien Lung no longer had the strength to bend a great bow and their hunting lodges fell into ruins. As the army deteriorated under emperors who no longer led it in person, the pressure of Westerners for concessions and trade advantages increased until, as K'ang Hsi had foretold, Europeans could do with China as they pleased.

The death of K'ang Hsi marked the end of an epoch of consolidation and expansion. When he ascended the throne the position of his dynasty was still precarious. He left it established in power and no one disputed the succession of his son nor the right of the Manchus to rule. During his reign the Chinese people had enjoyed long periods of peace and prosperity. With the exception of the rebellion, which had taken place in his youth, no war of any magnitude had troubled the vast masses of the people.

Not only did K'ang Hsi leave his empire at peace but he left it wealthy and prosperous. He had encouraged trade and had remitted taxation. His own tastes were frugal and he had been able to make many economies, only spending vast sums for the lasting benefit of the people. When he

died he left behind him the tradition of wise and paternal government, which functioned for the good of the state and so strengthened his throne and his dynasty.

The great mystery of his reign was his friendship with the Jesuits. Why did he surround himself with a group of foreign men and treat them with a freedom and friendliness which he denied to all others? His reasons for doing so were buried deep in the heart of the man who seldom saw the necessity of stating his real motives to others. It may have been because he distrusted his Chinese counsellors, while his Manchus, although admirable in warfare, had not the knowledge of the world beyond the borders of his empire which he, for reasons of state, was eager to acquire. It may have been, too, that he thought the influence of the Jesuits would be valuable in enlisting European support for his dynasty should the existence of his race be threatened by internal revolts. Or it may have been only the interest in science which he professed over and over again during his long life.

Certainly he saw the necessity of rousing China from her age-old dream of being the only centre of civilization in a universe otherwise inhabited by barbarians. He may have believed that scientific knowledge and new ideas would aid his people in taking a stand against the encroaching powers of the West. He was far in advance of his time in his realization of the important part which the West would sooner or later attempt to play in the Orient. It would appear as if he had used the tools which were nearest at hand to aid him in awakening his country to the realization of a new age which was bound to come. What he had not anticipated was the division of the Roman Catholic church into two opposing camps, which defeated each other and destroyed the prestige of Europeans in the eyes of the Chinese people. Until that happened it had been the policy of the emperor to emphasize in every way the importance of the exponents of Western culture at his court. When circumstances forced him to take opposite measures, it was inevitable that a reaction should occur.

Of all the monarchs of the East the only one to whom K'ang Hsi can be compared is Akbar, the great Mogul emperor of India. In their characters, their habits of life, and even in their policies there is a certain similarity.

Akbar, too, had his Jesuits and respected their learning and integrity. Although he lived nearly a hundred years before K'ang Hsi, he was faced by many of the same problems that arose in the government and administration of a recently conquered empire. The likeness in character of these two broad-minded rulers is better understood when it is remembered that they sprang from the same racial stock. Both were descended from the nomad hordes of the Gobi and the followers of Genghis Khan. From this dynamic source great men arose through the centuries, inspired by vigour and vitality which made them irresistible in war. Although springing from a barbaric people, they developed a surprising desire for cultural achievements when brought into contact with ancient civilizations.

The age in which K'ang Hsi lived was a remarkable one. He was a contemporary of Louis XIV of France and Peter the Great of Russia. On the other side of the world American colonists were establishing a foothold between the ocean and the forests of a vast unexplored new land. Great territories were being opened up to new influences, inventions changed the habits of the people, while improved communications linked the world together as it had never been linked before. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, legendary accounts of distant countries had been replaced by definite information. Travellers and priests had penetrated into every portion of the inhabited world.

A fine epitaph to the great emperor was left by the historian de Mailla. Of K'ang Hsi he writes :—

“Just posterity will beyond doubt assign to this prince a distinguished place among the greatest monarchs. Fully occupied between affairs of state, military achievements, and the study of liberal pursuits, beneficent, brave, generous, wise, active, and vigilant in policy, of profound and extended genius, having nothing of the pomp or indolence of Asiatic courts, although his power and wealth were both immense, the one thing alone wanting of this prince, according to the desire of the missionaries who have become the exponents of his eminent qualities, was to crown them all with the adoption of Christianity of which he knew the principles.”

Among his European biographers, whether they wrote an account of his life like Father Bouvet or merely included his reign in a general history of China, no dissenting voice

was raised either as to his character or as to the important place which he occupied in history. It is even said of him that he was one of the three most illustrious emperors who ever ruled over the Chinese people ; the first being T'ai Tsung of the Tang dynasty, who came to the throne in A.D. 627, and the last, the emperor Ch'ien Lung, the grandson of K'ang Hsi.

All Western historians agree that whereas he was a great ruler and distinguished himself equally in peace and war, he was at the same time a superior man ; one who stood out from among others of his generation, not only in physical strength and dexterity but in mind and moral character as well.

Lao-tzu, the " Old Philosopher ", once said to the Chinese people :—

" When the superior man lives in propitious times he mounts aloft, but when the period is against him he moves as if his feet were entangled."

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